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WELCOME

ISSUE 113



WE've reached the end of another Six Nations campaign and the 2019 championship was, on the whole, a disappointing one for Scotland, who finished fifth after a campaign that yielded just one win, and a draw.

But what a draw it was! The thrilling Calcutta Cup comeback against England ranks among the greatest in the history of the sport. Domestically, we bring you all you need to know ahead of this year's Melrose Sevens and we also caught up with former Scotland and British

& Irish Lions Coach Jim Telfer, to get his views on everything from professional rugby in the Borders to his Melrose days. Edinburgh and Glasgow Warriors have Heineken Champions Cup quarter-finals on the horizon, and I caught up with Grant Gilchrist and Adam Ashe to discuss those games. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to, or been involved with this issue and enjoy reading!

Gavin Harper

Editor
gavin@scrummagazine.com

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RECORD-BREAKER AND A LION GET ON THEIR BIKES FOR DODDIE

Former Scotland captain Rob Wainwright joined record-breaking long distance cyclist Mark Beaumont as they cycled from Edinburgh to Twickenham, to deliver the match ball for Saturday's Calcutta Cup clash and raise funds for the My Name's Doddie Foundation in the process.

The pair met the Scottish Rugby squad at Edinburgh Airport on Thursday, ahead of their departure, where captain Stuart McInally handed over the ball. The target was then to cover the 500 mile journey to the home of English rugby in 48 hours.

The first leg of the journey was to Stirling, where Mark held a talk in the city's MacRobert Centre about his 'Around the World in 80 Days' adventure, which he completed in a world record 78 days 14 hours, back in 2017.

The two then set off from the venue at 9.30pm on Thursday night, to complete the remaining 430 miles. In what was a very tiring endeavour, the pair arrived at Twickenham in time to be greeted by McInally, where they handed over the ball outside the stadium prior to kick-off.

Over £50,000 has been raised so far and donations can still be made by visiting <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Doddie500>.

At the start of the month, Doddie's foundation announced that they were committing a further £1.4 million towards research into finding a cure for Motor Neurone's Disease.





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Rugby Genius Crosses the Border

For the first time we have a Rugby Gen!us from south of the Border. Ronnie Pawluk lives in North Yorkshire but hails from Edinburgh, before his teaching career took him south. A Scrum reader from Edition #1 and a Scotland rugby fanatic, Ronnie's own rugby playing ended through injury, which led him to take up youth coaching. With his first entry to the quiz, Ronnie scoops £100 and case of Gen!us Craft Lager.

Ronnie has been a big fan of Doddie Weir throughout his Scotland and Lions career. Since Doddie received his diagnosis, Ronnie has even more admiration for his strength and tenacity in raising the profile of this terrible disease. Normally an ale drinker, Ronnie will be adding Gen!us to his shopping list to help support Doddie's foundation.



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1. Ned Haig, founder of the Melrose Sevens, came from which Scottish Town?

2. What guest teams will feature at this year's Aberdeen Standard Investments Melrose Sevens?

3. The Melrose Sevens is played at which ground?

4. Since 2001 only three Scottish club sides have the Melrose Sevens, name them?

5. Name this former Melrose Sevens winner's club crest?



6. **LAST GASP WINNER**
Caption this...



GAME ON!

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RUGBY STARS COME TOGETHER FOR DODDIE

A band of former international rugby stars joined forces recently to cycle from John O'Groats to Land's End, all in the name of raising money for the My Name's Doddie Foundation.

Former Scotland scrum-halves Bryan Redpath and Graeme Beveridge were among those to take part in the Great Rugby Cycle, alongside ex-World Sevens Player of the Year Ollie Phillips and former All Blacks prop Carl Hayman.

A band of cyclists, led by event organiser Stuart Thom, got on their bikes at the UK's most northerly point and cycled the length

of the country to Land's End as they raised funds for the foundation set up by former Scotland and British & Irish Lions lock Doddie.

The Great Rugby Cycle stopped off at Inverleith, home of Stewart's Melville RFC, with Scotland Head Coach Gregor Townsend joining Redpath, Hayman, Phillips and MC Bruce Aitchison for a Q&A as they recounted their stories of times with Doddie.

Hayman got to know Doddie during his time at Newcastle Falcons, and the former All Blacks tighthead explained to *SCRUM* how he had become involved: "I knew

Doddie from my Newcastle days and talking with Ollie Phillips – he said he was going to come and do it, I had some spare time up my sleeve and thought it would be a great thing to come and do, to help out a great character and an icon of rugby in the world.

"I'd seen Doddie play and he stands out with his headband, but it wasn't until I got to Newcastle I first met him. He's a character and he's one of rugby's great characters, right down to his tartan suits.

"That energy and his character is brilliant, and it was great to get to know him."



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The first season of Super 6, the new top tier of the Scottish domestic game, will kick off in early November 2019.

The competing Super 6 teams, who secured their places in the new competition through an open application process, have agreed to start the initial season after the conclusion of the Rugby World Cup.

The six teams will play 20 competitive matches each season made up of 10 Super 6 fixtures, played home and away, two Super 6 play-off fixtures and eight cross-border matches.

The opening matches of Super 6 will be played on the weekend of 9 November 2019 with games over the course of the tournament being scheduled for either Friday nights or Saturdays, based on the preference of the home team.

With a couple of stand-by weekends built in and no Super 6 matches scheduled over Guinness Six Nations weekends the tournament will conclude at the end of March with semi-finals over the weekend of 7 March 2020 and the Super 6 Final on the weekend of 28 March 2020.

The Super 6 competition fixture list will be compiled by Scottish Rugby. Other domestic league fixtures, Club XV fixtures and pro-team fixtures will all be considered when compiling the fixture list.

SUPER 6 SET FOR NOVEMBER KICK-OFF

Discussions around the cross-border element of the Super 6 season are on-going, with the competition proposed to follow after the Super 6 Final and played from mid-April onwards.

Scottish Rugby's Sean Lineen, who is heading up the on-field responsibilities for Super 6, said: "We have worked closely with the respective clubs to ensure the opening edition of Super 6 can be played over a block

of time that allows the clubs and players to fully focus on this exciting new competition.

"The Rugby World Cup will generate a huge focus on the sport and following that it will be a great opportunity to launch Super 6 and play the matches over a set period of time which will really create that week on week competition to test the players and coaches and enable fans to easily follow the progress of the tournament."





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10 THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT JAPAN

Japan is a mysterious country that is quite different from any other country in the world. Not only the beautiful locations, modern technology and the ancient culture, but there are many incredible things about Japan that fascinate us so much. While quirky at times and completely different from Western civilisation, we've fallen in love with Japan's quirks on our site visits for Rugby World Cup 2019; and you will too!

10. Politeness

The one trait that Japan can never be faulted on is their politeness. People go out of their way to be helpful and even when they do not speak English, their respectfulness is always top quality! Did you know that the Japanese rail service made a national apology for a train that departed 20 seconds early?!

9. Japanese Toilets

You will be ordering one of these after your trip to Japan! Who knew you could have such a high-tech bowel movement?! Your first encounter with one of these will most likely be in the airport after you arrive in Japan. Enjoy the gentle music that plays during your business (along with the heated seat), and be refreshed afterwards with a nice jet of water!

8. Cleanliness

The streets of Japan, even in bustling Tokyo, are always spotless. You may have difficulty in finding rubbish bins but don't be tempted to litter - as polite as the locals are, they are very proud of their country and will not be impressed with this deviation from their norm.

7. Vending Machines

Vending machines here in Scotland usually have cold drinks and snacks with

coffee/tea machines also dotted around. In Japan you could practically do your week's shop from a vending machine! Sushi, sake, beers and so much more can be gotten from a vending machine. And they aren't confined to cities!

6. Bullet trains

Travelling across large nations by rail can be hit or miss. In Japan, you can go from one side of the country to the other in a matter of hours on one of their bullet trains. You would hardly realise you were travelling at 200mph (320kmh)! Did you know that there is a Hello Kitty themed bullet train travelling across Japan this year?!

5. Sake

Japanese rice wine (Sake) is the most commonly available alcoholic drink. Taken hot or cold, the smooth tasting and varied fruity flavours will have this as a firm favourite for Scottish fans too when travelling to Rugby World Cup 2019.

4. Safety

For many, the worry of pickpockets and being robbed when on a trip can often put you off of travelling to some locations. There is very little to worry about when travelling in Japan. Their culture shames those who commit any type of crime and the people are so nice they will look out for foreign travellers if they see them being mistreated.

3. Sushi

Japanese sushi is a highlight for so many after their trip to Japan. We've enjoyed it in Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Nagasaki, Odawara and more. Even the "worst" sushi in Japan is better than any we've had anywhere else! Don't like sushi? Don't fret: other local dishes including tempura and noodles are so delicious that you'll have enough to keep you well fed!

2. Japanese Onsens

The thought of sharing a hot bath with naked strangers may be far outside your comfort zone. But if you can get to an onsen early in the morning all to yourself, it will be an experience that you will want to repeat again and again. The hot spring water in surroundings that are designed to relax and take you away from everyday stresses is a little piece of paradise!

1. Mount Fuji

For many, the top thing to see in Japan is Mount Fuji. The natural beauty and the vastness of its size can hardly be done justice in pictures. Be sure to try the Kuro-tamago "black egg" which are hard boiled from the hot springs of Owakudani. Consuming the eggs is said to add seven years to your life!

Do you want to experience Japan this year for Rugby World Cup 2019? Travel with us to The Land of the Rising Sun to see Scotland compete on the World stage. We have limited availability remaining on our packages so book now!

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MOVE AND RETURN FOR SCOTLAND DUO

Scotland scrum-half Sam Hidalgo-Clyne has joined Harlequins from Scarlets on loan for the remainder of the season.

The former Edinburgh man, whose last involvement with the national team came in the summer tour, has joined the Gallagher Premiership outfit after falling behind Wales incumbent number nine Gareth Davies and Kieran Hardy at Parc y Scarlets, while youngster Declan Smith has also been pushing for the scrum-half place.

He only joined Scarlets from Edinburgh at the beginning of the season.

Hidalgo-Clyne will also link up with former Edinburgh and Scotland team-mate Tim Visser at the Twickenham Stoop.

Harlequins Head of Rugby Paul Gustard said: "Sam's a fantastic scrum-half and we are very pleased to have been able to get him on board with us for the remainder of the season.

"I know he has the personality and energy to fit in very quickly and easily into our squad and I look forward to him contributing as we look to end the season on a high."



Cornell Du Preez has returned to training with Worcester Warriors, just six months after fracturing his larynx.

Du Preez suffered the injury in a collision with England lock Joe Launchbury in an early-season Gallagher Premiership defeat to Wasps and was unable to speak.

He underwent surgery and it was initially feared that he would miss the remainder of this season, but the 27-year-old is now back in full training.

It is not the first time Du Preez has suffered a potentially career-ending injury, only to bounce back. In 2014, he suffered a broken ankle and ligament damage after landing awkwardly in a tackle.

Worcester Warriors Director of Rugby Alan Solomons, said: "Cornell is without doubt one of the toughest players I have ever coached and I am not surprised that he has made such a relatively quick recovery from what was an horrific injury.

"He is a terrific rugby player and it's great to have him back in action."

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*CO₂ emissions: 175 – 159 g/km.

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Edinburgh Rugby have appointed Watsonians Head Coach Steve Lawrie to the club's coaching staff for next season.

Lawrie joins the professional outfit from Tennent's Premiership side, Watsonians, where he had been since the start of the 2018/19 season and was due to be at the helm of the club's foray into Super 6 next term, but has now been replaced in that role by Fergus Pringle.

He will now take up the position of Assistant Forwards Coach in the summer, replacing Ulster-bound Roddy Grant (pictured below) in the role.

Edinburgh Head Coach Richard Cockerill said: "Steve is a good Edinburgh man and has worked hard to achieve what he's done in the club game. I'm looking forward to working with him next season and beyond and to seeing him continue his development as a top young Scottish coach."

Before joining Watsonians in 2018, the talented coach assisted Phil Smith at Heriot's for the previous five years and was a crucial figure in the Goldenacre outfit winning the league championship in 2015 and a league and cup double in 2016.

During former hooker's professional playing career, he made 44 appearances for Edinburgh over two spells at the club. In between, he experienced two years in the English Championship with Doncaster. He represented Scotland at under-21, Sevens and A level before earning a full international cap against Samoa in 2013.

The 34-year-old is "hugely excited" by the opportunity to work alongside Cockerill and the rest of the on-field team.

"I'd like to thank George Watson's College, Watsonians, Heriot's and Scottish Rugby for supporting me in my development as a coach, and my family for their endless support. I can't wait to get started.

"It's an exciting time for the city to have a professional team challenging in the Heineken Champions Cup and Guinness PRO14, so I'm looking forward to earning the respect of the players and my colleagues and to contributing to the ongoing success of the club."

Watsonians said they are delighted to have appointed Pringle and Nikki Walker as Head Coach and Assistant Head Coach respectively and believe they are the right men to lead the club into Super 6, which will begin after November's conclusion of the World Cup in Japan.

Pringle, who played professionally for Scotland A and Edinburgh Rugby joins the

Steve Lawrie is replacing Roddy Grant (bottom left); while Fergus Pringle and Nikki Walker have taken over at Watsonians



Myreside club after previous spells coaching Boroughmuir, Currie and Romania U20.

His assistant, Walker, won 24 caps for Scotland during his playing days, which also involved representing Border Reivers, Ospreys, Worcester Warriors and Edinburgh.

Pringle said: "Watsonians are a club that I have always admired with strong traditions and Stevie has done a great job in the last two seasons to get them competing for play off places.

"There are some really committed club players who want to challenge themselves, reach their full potential and play to the

highest standard they can. Super 6 is a great opportunity combine this youth with experience and continue raising standards in the Scottish game," he added.

Walker, whose previous coaching experiences come with his hometown club Hawick and Scotland U20, said: "I know the club game well having been at Hawick while working with the under-20s has shown me the depth of talent there is coming through.

"Many of those exciting players will be involved in Super 6 and it is up to myself and Fergus to build a strong squad here at Watsonians."





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MATT SCOTT COLUMN



OVERCOMING SETBACKS ON AND OFF THE PITCH

Injuries and setbacks are an all-too frequent part of being a professional rugby player. One injury in particular – concussion – is being seen more and more in today's game. Unfortunately for myself, this has kept me sidelined for the past 4-5 months. Usually with such a long-term injury, I would have been forging ahead with my studying for my postgraduate MBA. However, with the nature of concussion affecting the concentration span and focus of the individual, I haven't been able to study at all since getting injured. Instead, I have been focusing on the property development side of my out-of-rugby interests. I managed to get down to Cheltenham at the start of March to view a house that I am renovating. The project is to turn a detached bungalow into a 4/5 bedroom family home in the catchment area of one of the best local secondary schools. Now, usually when individuals discuss their exploits in property, they are happy to regale details of how well they are doing and how much money they are making. More often than not, however, the reality of anything in property development or investing is one

of setback after setback, with those who end up succeeding being the ones who can overcome these challenges time after time. Luckily, as a rugby player, overcoming constant setbacks is par for the course but, for all my resilience, this project has tested my persistence to its maximum! From legal problems with neighbours, planning issues and my builder getting robbed of most of his tools, this project has had its fair share of bad luck. From the offset however, I told myself that whilst making a profit is obviously the main goal, a huge takeaway from the whole experience would be learning from my mistakes...and there have been many!

The first lesson I received was - always make sure any legal anomalies in the title deeds are either solved or have a plan in place to solve before completing on the purchase. The title deed for my property contained a legal covenant that prevented me from building a two-story property (which is not ideal when changing a bungalow into a 4/5 bedroom house!). Because this wasn't resolved, I have had a long-winded period of negotiations with my neighbours and their

solicitors to come to an agreement to release myself from the legal covenant. Another struggle has been to project manage the build from a distance. It obviously isn't ideal to be situated over 300 miles from the property you are renovating, so communication with the builder is key. This is definitely an area I could improve in hindsight, but I have a plan in place moving forward over the next few weeks, so by the time I write my next column I expect the extension to be completed and the new roof to be in place.

On a final note, I have been asked by a few people if I am worried about Brexit affecting the housing market and, subsequently, my chances of selling the house at the best price. It is true that many have held off buying property in the first quarter of 2019 as there has been a drop in the number property transactions. I am, however, confident that people who need to purchase homes in order to get their children in to the best local schools will be left with no choice but to buy over the next few months.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY

**Beth Fleming, Solicitor,
Wright, Johnston &
Mackenzie LLP**

Owning or running a family business requires many decisions ranging from small, everyday tasks to more complex and substantial planning. Having the ability to make those decisions is often taken as a given but what happens when that is no longer the case? Who will run the business and make sure it continues without any problems? It is a common misconception that only elderly or infirm individuals require powers of attorney or that a family member can step into your shoes should you lose the ability to make decisions for yourself. In fact, no one has an automatic right to manage your affairs and everyone should have a power of attorney in place as no one knows what will happen in the future.

A power of attorney is a written document through which an individual can nominate a trusted person or persons to manage his or her affairs. Anyone over the age of 16 who is capable can make a power of attorney. There are two types of power of attorney: financial and welfare.

A financial power of attorney (also called a continuing power of attorney) appoints one or more people to manage your financial and property affairs, including any business you may own. An attorney can access your bank accounts, enter into leases, run investments and appoint solicitors to act on your behalf and, more generally, ensure your business continues to run smoothly. Without a power of attorney, a guardian would need to be appointed, which is a costly and time consuming process.

It is also advisable to nominate someone to make decisions regarding your welfare. A welfare power of attorney gives authority to someone to make decisions about personal matters, such as consent to medical treatment or determine where you should live. A welfare power of attorney cannot be used unless and until you lose the ability to make those decisions for yourself.

Anyone over the age of 16 can be appointed as an attorney. This can be a



family member, friend, professional adviser or a combination. It is advisable to appoint more than one person to provide a safeguard should one attorney be unable to act.

Before a power of attorney can be used, it must be registered with the Office of the Public Guardian. This is a public body which maintains a central register of attorneys and can refer any matters of concern to court. Nonetheless, it is important that you nominate someone that you trust to act on your behalf.

A well drafted power of attorney can provide you with peace of mind to ensure that not only your business affairs, but also your general financial and welfare matters, are taken care of if you can no longer do so yourself. The team at WJM can provide

guidance for you to ensure that your wishes are clearly expressed in your power of attorney.

For more information:
0141 248 3434, www.wjm.co.uk



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FoSR

SCOTTISH RUGBY SCHOOL TOUR OF NAGASAKI 2018

At a routine meeting in the Spring of last year, our President David Mackay spoke with Graham Law of Scottish Rugby, who drew his attention to a Tour to Nagasaki by an under 16s team from 15 schools in areas of deprivation throughout Scotland.

The initiative immediately appealed to David and the later feedback from his colleagues, Les Fordham, Simon Frost and Neil McNair was no less enthusiastic. They knew that there was also likely to be support from, the Scottish Government, and the Bill McLaren Foundation. After further analysis, Friends of Scottish Rugby (FoSR) too decided to help sponsor the Tour.

David duly met Al Kellock who had been charged by Scottish Rugby CEO Mark Dodson to pull together a group of boys who would not normally dream of being involved in such a project.

Needless to say, Al's enthusiasm was infectious, and the measured values and standards expected of the participants were demanding and admirable as demonstrated by the following extracts from Al's briefing to Scottish Rugby and other agencies.

The ambitions of the tour were to be structured and measurable.

This was achieved by concentrating on the values of Rugby and actions that made these values real. ie Respect, Enjoyment, Achievement and Leadership.

Day 1 - visit to Nagasaki High School, where our Players were taught Kyudo and Japanese writing by the pupils.

Day 2 - Peace Ceremony marking the 73rd Anniversary of the Atomic Bomb - we heard from various delegates including the Japanese Prime Minister.

Day 3 - A guided tour of the Atomic Bomb Museum and a visit to the Mitsubishi Crane built in Scotland at the start of the 20th century.

Day 4 - A traditional Japanese BBQ and a chance to try more of the local food.

Day 5 - Match day against Nagasaki Select Team.

Day 6 - Dragon boat racing with the opposition, visit to Battleship Island and another chance to test the local cuisine.

But what of the rugby?

Scotland won the first game 43 -12 but lost the second 29-0.

The later game was against a very strong opposition and the character shown throughout the game was more pleasing than winning. The touring party huddled in the dark on the pitch and reflected on the week that had passed with no one else around. The squad had been challenged to learn and embrace a culture, build a team, change their own behaviours, challenge each other, make new friends, eat strange food, fill their jerseys and grow into men. It was in that huddle that they realised how much had been achieved. The enormity and emotion struck home, there were more than a few tears, and not just from the players.

Reflections.

The players were ambassadors for Scottish Rugby and we left Nagasaki with many new friends.

The aim was to provide the players with an experience of a lifetime which in turn would allow them to grow on and off the field and I know we were successful. Every player was pushed out of their comfort zone daily and asked to grow and learn very quickly. There were undoubtedly challenges throughout the

week but in every instance, with hard work the players came through stronger.

It would be impossible to define which experience had the greatest effect but the chance for the players to listen to the Major of Nagasaki and the PM talk about the impact of the Atomic Bomb 73 years on and only metres away from the hypo centre was incredible. Our chef was a 75-year local who had survived the bomb when only two and the respect that was shown to him from our players was inspiring.

Later in the year, David Mackay, and his wife Jane were invited by the SRU to a pre and post-match reception on the day of the Fiji game, to mix with the youngsters who had been on the trip to Nagasaki. Al Kellock was the lead host together with several VIPs and the team doctor, the learned Mike Proudfoot. To say they were warmly welcomed is a huge understatement. The FoSR support was applauded generously the opportunity to meet the youngsters was very touching and indeed really rewarding.

These kids, many from difficult backgrounds, were challenged daily in so many ways and yet ALL eventually responded magnificently which made them great young ambassadors for Scotland and Scottish Rugby. Mums and Dads and brothers and sisters were also so very proud. Many will continue to benefit from the adventure for many years to come.

AND finally, here is a FoSR forecast At least one of these youngsters will go on to play for Glasgow or Edinburgh and maybe even Scotland!

Friends of Scottish Rugby are so proud to have played even a small part of this.



He captained Scotland in the Six Nations in front of packed crowds at Murrayfield and was part of a British and Irish Lions tour of South Africa.

However, there was something extra-special about turning out in the Hong Kong Sevens for Rob Wainwright. The packed Hong Kong crowds, the buzz of a thriving city and the intense speed and agility of an event that he describes as one of the 'biggest in world sport' all combined to make it one of the highlights of his career.

It's a career that started out at Johnshaven-based school Lathallan, where Wainwright first discovered a love for rugby. Lathallan, a very popular rugby school south of Aberdeen, will host one of the key fixtures of the school rugby calendar in April 2019 – the Lathallan Snowdrop Sevens – with several top North East schools and club sides taking part.

The small school based in a 19th-century castle on the edge of the North Sea, was home to Wainwright for the first few years of his life where he learned some valuable lessons for life as he was ruled out of his first rugby match, aged just 11, due to a self-imposed injury.

"I was at Lathallan and I got into an argument with one of the older boys," said 37-times capped Wainwright, who now lives on a farm in the Isle of Coll in the Hebrides.

"I threatened to punch him and was told by my friend not to do it as I would injure myself or get into trouble and miss out on my first rugby match. He annoyed me again and I punched

FROM LATHALLAN TO THE BRITISH AND IRISH LIONS

him. "I ended up damaging my thumb because I didn't clench my fist properly enough and wasn't able or allowed to take part in the game. It taught me two valuable lessons, one to stay calm and another to clench my fists properly when punching.

"I went on in later life to box and learned how to punch properly and the boxing made a massive difference to my rugby career because it gave me extra fitness and a competitive edge over other players.

"Playing Sevens also helped a lot. There is so much speed and agility required to play the Sevens and it's a sport that helped me travel all over the world. From Dublin to Estoril to Hong Kong, I had some amazing trips and experiences.

"The Hong Kong Sevens is one of the biggest sporting events in the world. The atmosphere is incredible and there is so much vibrancy in the city.

"There is a high level of skill, speed and stamina required to play Sevens and if you can become confident at that game it can help with bigger rugby matches. That's why I value competition such as the Lathallan Snowdrop Sevens so highly."

Lathallan's Under 16s won their Sevens tournament last year, which has been renamed in honour of property developing tournament sponsors Snowdrop Developments, and have a couple of potential future internationals in their ranks – Archie Wilson and Tim Brown.

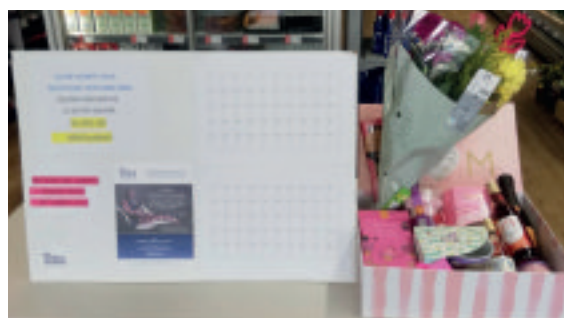
Archie is on the fringes of the Scotland Under 16 squad, while Tim has featured for Scotland Under-16s, been on a training camp in Spain with the Under-17s and hoping to make the breakthrough to the Under-18s next year.

Wainwright added: "It's fantastic to hear that we have young players coming through, but I would always tell them to believe in what I call: 'second placement'

"They may be the best at their level, but they should always go into a bigger pond and swim against others."

Lathallan is an independent day and boarding school, based on the edge of the North Sea, with average class sizes of just 12.

For more information:
www.lathallan.org.uk



FUNDRAISING FOR 'PROPER BORDERS LAD' DODDIE

Across the Borders and South of Scotland, Co-op stores are joining in with the fundraising efforts for "proper Borders Lad" Doddie Weir.

The idea was the brainchild of Kevin Clark, Store Manager of the store in Innerleithen, and he explained why Co-op's across the Borders have decided to help raise funds for the former Melrose, Scotland and British & Irish Lions lock as he continues to battle Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

Kevin said: "For me he was the obvious choice – Doddie is instantly recognisable and we live in a rugby constituency so it made a lot of sense to me.

"I've served Doddie before in Melrose and in other stores in my 10 years with the company and he's someone that everyone will get right behind."

There are plans to hold fundraising events across all the region's stores, from bake sales to tombolas and raffles, while copies of Doddie's autobiography will also be on sale.

"They are £20 each so that on its own should raise £4000 straight away," said Kevin, while adding that the amount raised since the idea launched at the beginning of March was already into four-figures.

He continued: "We're hoping to get Gen'lus Brewing in as well so that's another way that we'll be able to help raise money for Doddie."

Kevin also confirmed there are plans to take part in the Labyrinth Challenge – an assault course event that will take place at Dalkeith Country Park in May, while he is hoping to organise a fun day somewhere in the Borders, with help from one of the area's rugby clubs, and with proceeds from the day going to the My Name's Doddie Foundation.

"We're looking at getting a team together for the Labyrinth Challenge – it is something that everyone can take part in. Not everyone is able to do Tough Mudder," he continued, while adding that plans for the fun day are still at an extremely early stage.





GRAHAM SET TO SCALE NEW REFEREEING HEIGHTS

Scottish referee Graham Allen has officiated matches in all sorts of locations, from Edinburgh to Barbados, but next month he'll be blowing his whistle on a rugby pitch like no other.

Edinburgh-based Allen is taking part in a fundraiser for rugby charity Wooden Spoon – one of Scottish Rugby's official charity partners, which will see a team attempt to break two Guinness World Records on Mount Everest.

The challenge will see the group battle acclimatisation and heights of 6,500 metres to play the highest game of full contact rugby and the highest game of mixed rugby in history.

Allan has previously officiated, either as a referee or assistant referee, at all club levels within Scotland, as well as Cup, Shield, Bowl, school and university finals. His experience includes officiating at pro games, the Heineken Cup, IRB 7s and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, but this match will be something different.

Graham said: "Rugby has been a big part of my life, both as a player and as a referee. I support Wooden Spoon and when I was asked would I like to come as a referee and raise some money, I said I would be absolutely delighted."

The challenge aims to raise more than £200,000 towards projects supporting children and young people with disabilities or facing disadvantage across the UK and Ireland. Allen's brother, who was severely autistic, was assisted by Wooden Spoon and the referee has seen the impact it can make.

"My brother passed away sadly in November and I'm going to do it for him and all the other children, parents and carers involved in Wooden Spoon," he said.

Graham will be joined by a number of former rugby internationalists, including Wales and British & Irish Lions wing Shane Williams, England's Tamara Taylor and another former British & Irish Lion Lee Mears and former IRB Sevens World Player of the Year, Ollie Phillips.

While many of those involved are used to maintaining high levels of fitness, the training required for this challenge has been on a different scale. Preparation has included learning mountaineering skills on Ben Nevis in winter weather, altitude chamber training and even a few dips into a frozen lake in Finland.

The 54-year-old also said he is not concerned about enforcing discipline on Everest, joking: "I've been refereeing for too many years to be worried about it."

And in addition to raising money for a good cause, Graham said the challenge comes with another perk: "It gives me bragging rights to say that I'm going to be refereeing at the highest level in the world."

To contribute to Graham's fundraising target at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/GrahamAllen5

For more information: everestrugby.org.uk



BY JAMIE LYALL

LIONS LEGEND TELFER TALKS SCOTLAND, LIONS AND HIS DAYS WITH MELROSE

From their delicate perch on the arm of a sofa, Jim Telfer's spectacles teeter and tumble towards the floor. The glasses are hurtling towards a potentially catastrophic meeting with the ground when out shoots a sprawling hand to rescue them mid-plummet.

"You never lose it!" the great man smiles, wielding digits shaped by a thousand rucks. "Well, they cost a lot of money..."

The leviathan of Scottish and British and Irish Lions rugby is 79 now, but when he shakes your hand, it is with a grip that would turn a plank to kindling. When he talks about the game, when he engages his astonishing brain and invites you inside, it is like pacing the halls of a vast library.

Which tome today, then? The Scottish pack? "If you were going up a close to have a fight with somebody, would you want any of Scotland's locks with you? I'm not so sure." How about politics? "One of the reasons we're

coming out of Europe is that England don't like taking orders from anybody." Villiame Mata?

"Christ, he's the best forward in Scotland! He's like a Nakarawa but with more rugby." And the Lions? "A lot of snouts in the trough now – that's what's keeping it going."

Let's start with earliest volumes, scribed at Melrose, where he was introduced to the sport and where he can still be found every other Saturday.

The legend of Telfer looms large over The Greenyards – the belligerent back-row for Scotland and the Lions who would subject himself to brutal solo training sessions; the snarling coach whose thunderous oratory, relentless drive and towering intellect are etched into rugby folklore.

Yet at the heart of it all, behind this grand portrayal of Telfer, you find insecurity, even anxiety.

"I'm not a confident bloke, y'know?" he said. "I had a great sense of failure. I didn't want

to fail. I had no ambition to play for Scotland, I never thought I'd play for Scotland, but I tried to be as good a player as I could be.

"I took the training at Melrose on a Tuesday and Thursday and trained three other times myself, just because I wanted to. I had stones - big stones - that I would lift above my head at the burn beside the house.

"It seems crazy, but I used to come down to Melrose, the door was locked so I'd climb through the window to get in and get the weights. I remember training at Melrose - seems bloody stupid - on the pitch when the snow was quite deep and I had to sprint along a bit where the snow had been kept back, and that was my training.

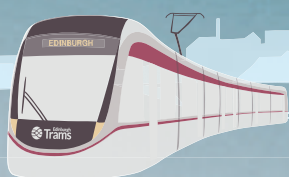
"It was a fear of failure, but once I get my teeth into something...you asked me if I was a gardener, there's a cup behind you that I won five times for that garden along there. Once I get my mind made up, I want to have the best garden in the town. I'm not a

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“I’m not the kind of coach that puts their arm around players, says ‘do your best’, you know how they all go around and cuddle each other.”

gardener but I like to go into competitions.”

Telfer has lived in Galashiels and tended these gardens for much of his adult life. As a player, he would train on the back pitches at Netherdale, taking a devilish pleasure in bettering himself on the soil of his club’s biggest enemies.

“Rodger Arneil was my great rival. He was from Gala but played for Edinburgh Accies, a very good player,” he said.

“I remember recovering from a cartilage operation, which took about five months to get better – about a fortnight’s job now. I used to train at Netherdale, deliberately, because nobody from Gala was training. I used to run around the pitch sort of miming to myself that Rodger Arneil was not going to get in the team – it was really sore on my knee, like running on broken glass.

“I make the joke now that when we came to live here 22 years ago, we had a dog, and I used to take it down to Netherdale and let it pee on the pitches – that’s not true but I used to crack the joke that I did.”

The landscape of Borders rugby, Telfer says, is drastically different now. Too parochial. Too intransigent. He insists the game here is in terminal decline, slaughtered by its own stubbornness and its failure to embrace the district set-up rather than drown amid the competing squabbles of each club.

“Borders rugby is on its last legs and they don’t seem to want to do much about it. I could see this coming years ago because they’re so heads-in-the-sand,” he said.

“I campaigned for the districts and I knew there would always be a problem with resources and money but I thought rugby would take us through. The clubs



were very negative down here. They’ll no’ admit they’ve made a mistake when their rugby’s withering before them.

“The players coming through are just not there. There’s Stuart Hogg, Greig Laidlaw is still playing, but they’re limited now. It’s a shame.

“The great problem now is we’re losing our experts. Years ago, we used to have lots of players in the Scottish team, lots of coaches coming through. Now, we’re not even getting the coaches in. Gregor Townsend, John Dalziel and Calum MacRae are the last of the generation.

“Because you don’t have top-quality players coming from here, you won’t get the opportunity as a coach to come through. You daren’ae say it, but I could say, ‘I told you so’, because they’ve not really kept up with the times.”

It has been twelve years since the Borders had a professional team when the Reivers, having been formed, merged with Edinburgh, then re-established, were finally executed in 2007. Telfer still boggles at what he felt was an obduracy in the rugby community to savour its pro-team.

“I’m not saying we should have a team – the Borders were given a chance and didn’t take it. The Borders should never get a team again because they don’t deserve one,” Telfer said.

“It was always a struggle but the reason I wanted a Borders pro-team was because we had the culture, we had the heritage, we had the experts.

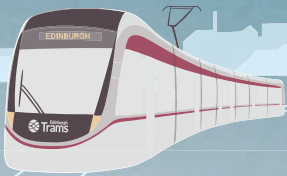
“I was amazed sometimes. Leinster were coming over and you’d say to people, ‘would you no’ want to see Brian O’Driscoll play? Big Shane Horgan?”

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“‘Nah, I’m nae caring. What do I care?’ Brian O’Driscoll! I can remember saying that to people.

“They shot themselves in the foot and eventually shot themselves in the heart. The whole world revolves within the 30-mile radius. If you go outside of 30, well you’re in a foreign country. In rugby, you couldn’t do that because you’re part of world rugby – if you’re not part of it, you’re out of it.

“What they lost were heroes. There’s nobody here, there’s not a Blair Kinghorn. Stuart Hogg plays in Glasgow – coming doon to the pub in Hawick’s no’ much good.”

Telfer spent the decade since leaving Scottish Rugby working with the Melrose Wasps (the club’s under-18 team) and only stopped coaching at 75. He wanted to give his time to “the youngsters” of his club, but if you

reckon being a 17-year-old schoolboy meant being treated any differently to a British and Irish Lion, you were sorely mistaken. Telfer was just as meticulous and just as exacting.

“I’m not the kind of coach that puts their arm around players, said ‘do your best’, you know how they all go around and cuddle each other,” he chided. “David Leslie had a classic line – ‘cuddling’s what I do to my wee girl when she can’t sleep at night’. I would still be regarded as quite hard.

“The greatest thing in being a coach is you’ve got to be honest, you’ve got to make the players honest and admit things. I’m not saying it’s as physical but I expect the same standards. And if you don’t do that, you’re dropping your own standards and the standards of the players won’t be as good.

“When I went to the Wasps, they

were bloody awful. One of the reasons I went was because I heard they had a drinking culture – if there was a culture, it was never there when I was there.

“The first game I coached, Melrose versus Peebles Colts, we got beaten by 50 points. I remember that day because a laddie who I’d coached at the Borders was snivelling at my team, ‘haw haw haw’, and I thought, ‘I’m going to get you’. We eventually beat Peebles – and continued to do so.”

Vying with Arneil for a place in the Scotland team or cowing a cheeky teenager nearly half a century later, Telfer is a competitor to the last.

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RED MEAT NUTRITION FOR RUGBY PERFORMANCE

Rugby players' training and game day performance places immense demands on their bodies, so effective nutrition is key for optimal physical and mental performance.

The misconception is that rugby players just need lots of calories, irrespective of good nutrition. The reality is different. Body composition and player-specific stresses mean that training will be correlated with their diet. As Stuart Hogg recently said: "In this job it is incredibly important to fuel your body correctly. All the training and conviction in the world won't make up for a diet that is not right."

Being classified as a high-biological value protein means that red meat is one of the richest natural sources in our diets. To maintain muscle mass, on average, a rugby player would aim to consume around 1.7-2g of protein per kilo of body weight per day. To give a little perspective, raw, lean (unprocessed) red meat contains an average of 20-24g of protein per 100g.

Red meat, such as Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially Selected Pork, provides the body with all eight essential amino acids required by adults. These are crucial for growth, maintenance and repair of our bodies. Further, red meat contains the branch chain amino acid (BCAA) - leucine. Leucine is the most effective amino acid in stimulating muscle growth.

What about the micronutrients of red meat?

Each type of red meat contains different amounts of micronutrients, so it is good to be aware for your nutrition.

Iron: Beef is richest in haeme-iron - the most easily absorbed form. Iron is essential for energy metabolism, cognitive development, the formation of red blood cells and a normal functioning immune system. Iron is key for us to transport oxygen around our bodies, meaning you cope better with lactic acid build-up in your muscles.

Zinc: Red meat is the only source of absorbable zinc in our diets and a lean 100g steak contains around 5.6g of zinc, contributing to about one third of our daily recommended intake. Beef, lamb and pork all contain zinc which is key for muscle recovery.

B-Vitamins: The main function of the B-vitamin complex is to transfer our food into usable energy. Red meat contains a number of these B-vitamins which all work as a vehicle to boost exercise capacity and reduce the fatigue from strenuous exercise.

B1 (Thiamine): Pork is a rich source of B1 which plays a crucial role to create energy.

B2 (Riboflavin): Beef and pork both contain B2 which works as an antioxidant by mopping up free radicals produced during intense exercise whilst helping you to fight fatigue.

B3 (Niacin): Beef, lamb and pork are all rich sources. Niacin helps to facilitate the repair process and converts food into energy.

B6: Beef is a rich source and is vital for normal immune function, nerve function as well as regulation of blood sugar levels.

B12: Beef, lamb and pork are natural rich sources of vitamin B12. It is a building block of red blood cells and helps us fight fatigue.

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The Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially Selected Pork labels guarantee that you are buying the best in terms of quality, taste and provenance. The brands are also underpinned by one of the longest-running assurance schemes in the world ensuring high standards of animal welfare in Scotland and a promise of quality from farm to fork.

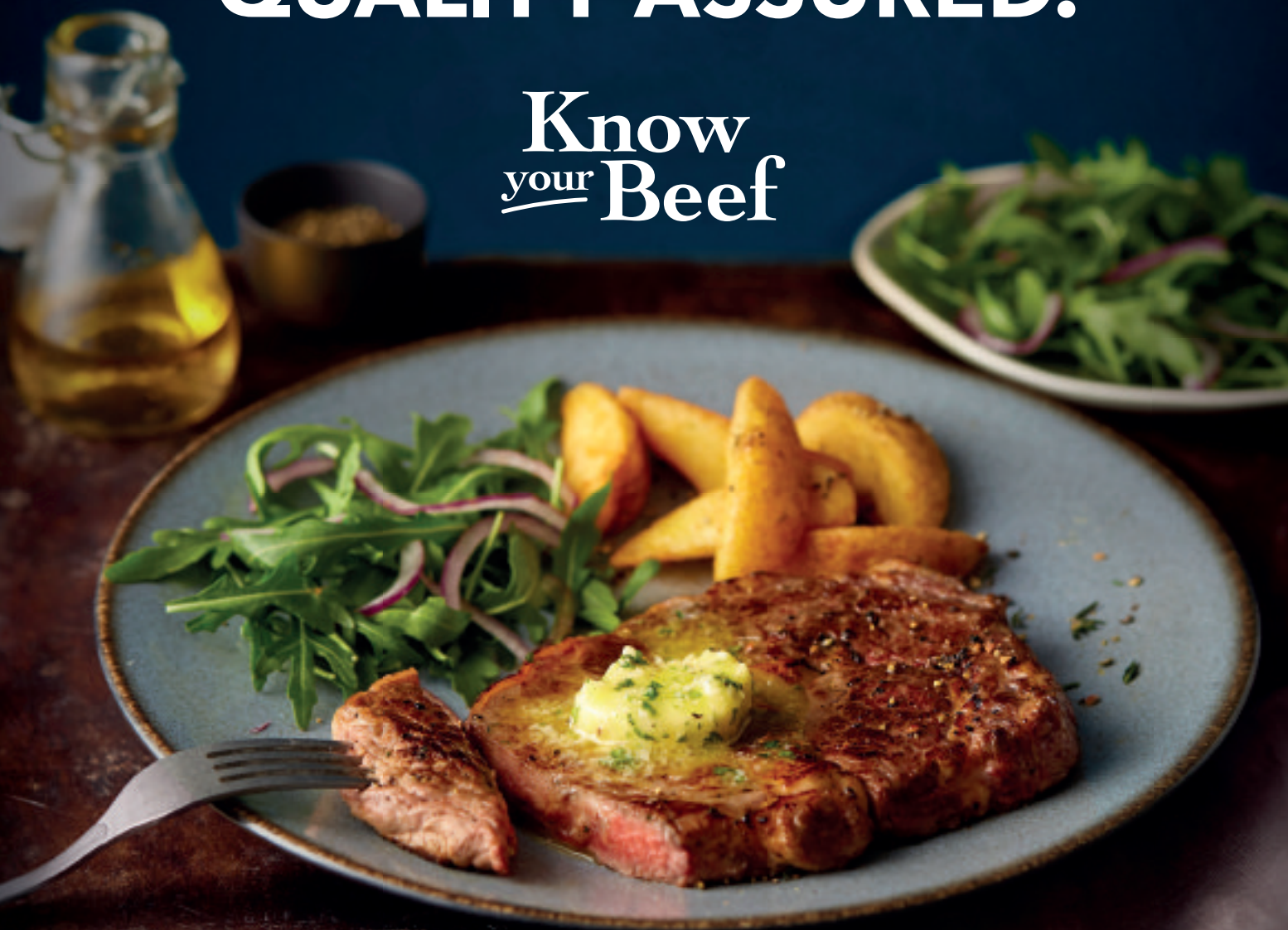
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For more information: Visit your local member of the Scotch Butchers Club or www.scotchkitchen.com for recipe inspiration.

Ex- Scotland rugby player Thom Evans is fronting a new campaign aimed at inspiring people about the role of lean red meat in a healthy diet

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SCOTCH BEEF ANNOUNCED AS HEALTHY EATING PARTNER OF SCOTTISH RUGBY



From left: Scotland stand-off Adam Hastings, butcher John Saunderson, of Saunderson's Butchers Edinburgh; Edinburgh Rugby centre and Scotland squad member Chris Dean; chef Neil Forbes, Café St Honore, Edinburgh; and Scotch Beef Farm of the Year 2018 winner Niall Jeffrey announcing the Scotch Beef Healthy Eating partnership at BT Murrayfield



One of Scotland's best-loved food brands, Scotch Beef PGI, has been announced as the Official Healthy Eating Partner of Scottish Rugby. The partnership will see Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) deliver a range of activities with Scottish Rugby in the coming 12 months, including an initiative to raise the profile of the importance of healthy eating as part of Scottish Rugby's schools programmes.

The Scotch Beef brand's sustainability credentials are being highlighted in the partnership, which has seen the brand profiled at home international matches and open training sessions.

The announcement comes as QMS launches a major marketing and PR campaign behind Scotch Beef with the simple and clear objective of increasing consumer awareness of what is behind the brand.

Carol McLaren, Director of Marketing and Communications, believes the partnership with Scottish Rugby is an exceptional opportunity to further communicate all that

sets quality-assured beef from Scotland apart.

She said: "Scotch Beef is at the heart of Scotland's larder and our partnership with Scottish Rugby will help us to communicate, not only its value in a healthy diet but also its excellent sustainability credentials.

"It is vital that consumers are informed of the facts about Scotch Beef, given the confusion being caused by misinformation, so they can make informed purchase decisions.

"Our message is very simple – if people look for the Scotch Beef label they know they are buying a quality product underpinned by world-leading quality assurance and produced by people who care."

Toni Blackhurst, Head of Marketing and Sponsorship at Scottish Rugby, said: "Scotch Beef is an iconic global brand and Scottish Rugby is proud of this healthy eating partnership. "Scotland's top rugby players are very aware of the importance of beef, lamb and

pork as part of a healthy balanced diet.

"We are working with QMS on a range of initiatives, including involving them in our schools programmes and increasing the focus on healthy eating and nutrition in our schools' activity.

"Partnering with Scottish brands who share the same global ambitions as Scottish Rugby is key in helping us to internationalise our brand while promoting Scotland around the world." Quality Meat Scotland's health and education programme includes supporting the work of the Royal Highland Education Trust. QMS also runs a Meat Vouchers Scheme which gives every secondary school in Scotland the opportunity to apply for a voucher of up to £100 for the purchase of beef, lamb and pork.

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MIXED FORTUNES AND A DRAMATIC FINALE FOR SCOTLAND

If there's one thing we've learned from watching the Scotland national team over the years, it's to expect the unexpected.

Coming into the Guinness Six Nations, Gregor Townsend's squad was rather depleted through injury and as much as an opening weekend win over Italy was anticipated, the capitulation in the final ten minutes of that game certainly was not.

The next three games against Ireland, France and Wales were all seen as winnable fixtures, but in reality, the Scots never looked likely to secure victory in any of them.

Game of the tournament

With the odds stacked against them and chasing a first win at the home of English Rugby since 1983, frankly the Scots looked slow, unorganised and somewhat incompetent in that first half an hour, which at times looked like men against boys.

A Jack Nowell score after just over a minute was a sign of things to come, as further tries from Tom Curry, Joe Launchbury and Jonny May had secured the bonus point for England before the clock had even reached half an hour.

Stuart McInally showed brilliant determination to run in from 60 metres, after charging down an Owen Farrell kick. At the start of the second half, Darcy Graham did well to evade a number of tacklers on his way to reducing the deficit with a try in the 47th minute, before a further try for Magnus Bradbury meant Scots across the country began to dream of the unthinkable. (31-19).

Finn Russell turned provider for Graham and Sam Johnson, either side of an interception try of his own, which had the Scots in front before it was snatched at the death by a converted George Ford try.

Coming from 31-0 down and scoring six tries at Twickenham was a perfect demonstration of the heart and desire in that Scottish squad. None of the players involved at Twickenham will have hindered their World Cup chances, and with big names returning from injury, Head Coach Townsend will have a headache about who makes that it onto that plane to Japan.

World Cup: competition for places

With just six months until the showcase of rugby

and the potential pinnacle of careers begins in Japan, a number of players who before the Guinness Six Nations began wouldn't have been considered have really put their names forward for selection.

The aforementioned Graham and Ritchie fall into this category, with Adam Hastings also proving his worth both at stand-off and full back.

Townsend's biggest headache could well come in the back-row. Saturday's combination of Sam Skinner, Watson and Bradbury worked incredibly well, but with John Barclay, Ryan Wilson, David Denton, Josh Strauss, Gary Graham and Matt Fagerson to throw into the equation, Scotland's strength in depth for this department looks very impressive.

The centre partnership has come up for discussion in recent weeks, with many people unconvinced by the performances of Peter Horne and Nick Grigg during the Guinness Six Nations. By the time the World Cup comes around, Townsend should also have Huw Jones, Duncan Taylor, Matt Scott and Mark Bennett in contention for midfield places.



SCOTLAND FINISH BOTTOM AFTER WINLESS CAMPAIGN AS MUNRO DEPARTS



Scotland finished bottom of the 2019 Women's Six Nations Championship after a disappointing campaign that saw them lose all five fixtures, and ended with the departure of Head Coach Shade Munro to take up another role with Scottish Rugby.

Scotland kicked off their campaign at Scotstoun full of hope after pushing the world's fourth best side, Canada, close in November. Their Autumn Internationals started, though, with a 38-0 drubbing at the hands of Italy, and the same opponents awaited Scotland Women in their championship opener.

They got off to the worst possible start, falling behind to a try as early as the fifth minute, and in truth, their campaign only really got going in round four when Wales visited Scotstoun, but that match too ended in defeat.

The losses to the Italians, Irish and Welsh will have hurt Scotland, having been competitive against the former two sides in the past, and competing well with Wales in the penultimate game, only for mistakes and a high error count costing Munro's side victory.

The 80-0 drubbing at the hands of Grand Slam winners England will have hurt, too, but for different reasons. There is little doubt the squad, made up of largely amateur players,

gives 100% effort, but they were simply unable to compete with the largely fully professional English outfit who, in Katy Daley-McLean and Emily Scarratt, possess two of the world's top players.

Munro's departure from the Head Coach role had been confirmed in-house before the championship got underway, with the ex-Glasgow Warriors assistant coach taking a role within the Fosroc Scottish Rugby Academy but was only made public in the aftermath of the defeat to England.

His tenure has seen great strides made in the women's game, although this season's results have not reflected that. To have players playing professionally and others benefitting from academy contracts is a huge step in the right direction ahead of the 2021 World Cup, but whoever replaces Munro must now kick on from that.

One of the successes of this Six Nations is 20-year-old Rachel McLachlan, who has been an ever-present in the side having only recently taken up the sport. She honed her sporting skills in judo, but looks equally at home on the openside of Scotland's scrum and will benefit hugely from the experiences she's had this season.

Looking back at his time in charge, Munro said: "I've really enjoyed my time working with this group of players and seeing the improvements they have made. I am proud of how much they have all developed individually and as a team over the last few years.

"Increasing the level of coaching and amount of training regionally, along with the increase in National camps and competitive fixtures has helped hugely with this development.

"There have also been some fantastic highlights during my time involved most notably achieving our first Six Nations win in 35 attempts along with our first away win in the same competition last year against Ireland.

"Given the passion and commitment the players show when representing their country and their collective desire to continue to improve I have no doubt that further success awaits Scotland Women's rugby. I would like to wish them all the very best for the future.

"The new Academy position will provide an opportunity to work with different players who are at a key stage in their career, making this an attractive role to take on and one I am looking forward to."



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DATE	MATCH	STADIUM	LOCATION
Sun 22 Sept	Ireland v Scotland	International Stadium Yokohama	Kanagawa Prefecture, Yokohama City
Mon 30 Sept	Scotland v Samoa	Kobe Misaki Stadium	Kobe City
Wed 9 Oct	Scotland v Russia	Shizuoka Stadium Ecopa	Shizuoka Prefecture
Sun 13 Oct	Japan v Scotland	International Stadium Yokohama	Kanagawa Prefecture, Yokohama City

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SIX NATIONS REVIEW



TOP POINTS SCORER

1. Owen Farrell	59
2. Gareth Anscombe	43
3. Jonny May	30
4. Tommaso Allan	25
5. Jonathan Sexton	23

TOP TRY SCORER

1. Jonny May	6
2. Yoann Huget	4
3. Josh Adams	3
Keith Earls	3
Blair Kinghorn	3
Darcy Graham	3
Edoardo Padovani	3



WALES SEND GATLAND OUT IN STYLE WITH GRAND SLAM GLORY

Wales sent departing Head Coach Warren Gatland off in style as they defeated Ireland to seal a third Grand Slam of the New Zealander's decade in charge on Super Saturday, while France condemned Italy to another winless campaign, and Scotland retained the Calcutta Cup in the most dramatic of games at Twickenham.

Wales' 25-7 win over Ireland was the culmination of a campaign that nearly failed to get off the ground - they were 16-0 down at half-time at the Stade de France in round one, before but two horrendous mistakes allowed George North to score twice and Gatland's side went on

to win 24-19.

The 2013 and 2017 British and Irish Lions Head Coach then made 10 changes to the squad for their trip to Rome in round two, but Wales proved too strong for Conor O'Shea's Italian side as they won 26-15, with tries from Josh Adams and Owen Watkin, while Dan Biggar kicked 14 points. England had been brutal in their defeat of Ireland in Dublin in round one, while they brushed aside a hapless French squad at Twickenham in the second round, setting up an early Grand Slam decider at the Principality Stadium.

It was a cagey affair, with Tom Curry's first-half

try giving England the advantage at the interval, before Wales took hold of the game in the second half, with tries from Cory Hill and Adams sealing a 21-13 victory.

Next up for Wales was a trip to BT Murrayfield, and the New Zealander maintained his perfect record in the Six Nations against Scotland as Wales edged a close-fought encounter 11-18 to move one step closer to the title.

England kept the pressure on with a 57-14 mauling of Italy in round four, while Ireland remained in the hunt going into Super Saturday having gone unbeaten following their opening round slip-up.

Wales, though, produced a vintage performance - without doubt their best of this year's championship - to seal their third Grand Slam in Gatland's decade in charge.

Italy once more finished bottom of the table, and their wait for a championship win extends to another year - their best chances came at either end of this year's Guinness Six Nations, but they were roundly beaten by Scotland in round one despite a late comeback; before putting up a good fight in defeat to France in Rome on Super Saturday.

FINAL 2019 GUINNESS SIX NATIONS TABLE

TEAM	P	W	L	D	PTS DIFF	BONUS PTS	PTS
WALES	5	5	0	0	+49	0	23
ENGLAND	5	3	1	1	+83	4	18
IRELAND	5	4	1	0	+1	2	14
FRANCE	5	2	1	0	-25	2	10
SCOTLAND	5	1	3	1	-20	3	9
ITALY	5	0	5	0	-88	0	0



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The fuel consumption you achieve in real life conditions and CO₂ produced will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. *There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO₂ figures. The CO₂ figure(s) shown however, is based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration. Only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other cars tested to the same technical standard.

Blair Kinghorn became the first Scotland player to score a Six Nations hat-trick as Gregor Townsend's side kicked off their 2019 campaign with a comfortable win over Italy at BT Murrayfield.

Kinghorn, whose hat-trick was the first in the championship by a Scot since Iwan Tukalo's treble against Ireland 30 years ago, crossed twice in the first half before completing his hat-trick after the break.

However, despite a bonus-point win to open the campaign, Head Coach Gregor Townsend was not entirely pleased with what he saw.

He said: "The last 15 minutes was disappointing – the yellow card had a bearing on that, and Italy were running the ball from deep, so we've got a few areas to improve but overall, the first 60 minutes we were very pleased.

"Italy had their moments in the first half – I felt we could have upped the pace at times and we did that in the second half which got us ahead on the scoreboard."

Scotland dominated early on and got their reward with Kinghorn's first try – a run-in after he gathered a superbly weighted cross-field kick by Finn Russell, while the second was from short range after a nice backline move and good hands by Stuart Hogg.

Greig Laidlaw converted the latter score, and Scotland held a 12-3 lead at the break, an advantage that did not reflect their dominance in the opening 40 minutes – Grant Gilchrist should have scored from a maul early on, while Greig Laidlaw uncharacteristically chose to kick with one man to beat when Jamie Ritchie was free in space on his inside.

After the break, Stuart Hogg added a third try, touching down following another lovely kick from Russell before Kinghorn took centre stage, completing his hat-trick following strong carries by his Edinburgh colleagues Allan Dell and Ritchie.

SCOTLAND 33-20 ITALY

SCOTLAND SCORERS

TRIES: KINGHORN (3), HOGG, HARRIS

CONS: LAIDLAW (3), RUSSELL

ITALY SCORERS

TRIES: PALAZZANI, PADOVANI, ESPOSITO

CONS: ALLAN

PENS: ALLAN

ATTENDANCE: 67,144

MAN OF THE MATCH

BLAIR KINGHORN



From left to right: Sam Johnson, Gary Graham and Jake Kerr

KINGHORN HAT-TRICK HELPS SCOTLAND START CAMPAIGN IN STYLE

Scotland were cruising and Townsend elected to use the final half-hour to give the likes of Laidlaw, Stuart McInally and Russell a rest, while introducing Jake Kerr and Gary Graham for their debuts.

Another replacement, Chris Harris, scored his first international try and, 33-3 in front, Scotland appeared to take their foot off the gas in the final quarter as Italy stormed back into the match with tries from scrum-half Guglielmo Palazzani, replacement Edoardo Padovani and wing Angelo Esposito inside the final 10 minutes.

In truth, Scotland had not been hugely tested by the Italians, but it was a banana skin avoided for Townsend's side ahead of their second consecutive home match, against Ireland, in round two.

Kinghorn's display earned him the Man of the Match award, but there were impressive showings from Ritchie on his championship debut and for Australian-born centre Johnson on his international bow.

With the likes of Fraser Brown, Jonny Gray, Peter Horne and Sean Maitland all expected to come back into contention for the visit of Ireland, it was a good afternoon's work to begin the championship for Townsend's side, who topped the table after the opening weekend.

Captain Greig Laidlaw said post-match:

"It's a good start here at BT Murrayfield – we've a few learnings to take out of the game but I felt we stepped up in the middle part of the game to take it away from Italy, so we're delighted with that."

Scotland: 15 Stuart Hogg, 14 Tommy Seymour, 13 Huw Jones, 12 Sam Johnson, 11 Blair Kinghorn, 10 Finn Russell, 9 Greig Laidlaw **CAPTAIN**; 1 Allan Dell, 2 Stuart McInally, 3 WP Nel, 4 Ben Toolis, 5 Grant Gilchrist, 6 Sam Skinner, 7 Jamie Ritchie, 8 Ryan Wilson.

Replacements: 16 Jake Kerr (McInally 63'), 17 Jamie Bhatti (Dell 58'), 18 Simon Berghan (Nel 49'), 19 Gary Graham (Wilson 72') 20 Josh Strauss (Skinner 14'), 21 Ali Price (Laidlaw 58'), 22 Adam Hastings (Russell 76'), 23 Chris Harris (Jones 58')

Italy: 15 Jayden Hayward, 14 Angelo Esposito, 13 Luca Morisi, 12 Tommaso Castello, 11 Michele Campagnaro, 10 Tommaso Allan, 9 Guglielmo Palazzani; 1 Andrea Lovotti, 2 Leonardo Ghiraldini, 3 Simone Ferrari, 4 David Sisi, 5 Dean Budd, 6 Sebastien Negri, 7 Braam Steyn, 8 Sergio Parisse **CAPTAIN**

Replacements: 16 Luca Bigi (Ghiraldini 59'), 17 Cherif Traore (Lovotti 51'), 18 Tiziano Pasquali (Ferrari 63'), 19 Federico Ruzza (Budd 51'), 20 Jimmy Tuivaiti (Negri 59'), 21 Tommaso Benvenuti (Morisi 79'), 22 Ian McKinley (Allan 72'), 23 Edoardo Padovani (Castello 49')



SCOTLAND RUN OUT OF STEAM IN OPENING DEFEAT TO ITALY

Scotland Women opened their Six Nations campaign with a spirited showing against their Italian counterparts, but ultimately their spirit was not enough as they fell to a 7-28 defeat at Scotstoun.

Head Coach Shade Munro praised his team for their efforts, despite falling behind to Ilaria Arrighetti's early try as they were beaten by the Azzurre for the second time in three months.

Munro said: "We never gave up – credit where credit's due but we've got to learn. It's not called Test match rugby for nothing so it's always a Test and these games are never easy. We'll keep working hard and we'll get there."

The Italians dominated early on and created a number of potential try-scoring opportunities, but Scotland's determination in defence kept them at bay and meant the deficit was only seven points, before the hosts' cause was further hampered when they lost tighthead prop Megan Kennedy to the sin-bin in the 12th minute.

Despite being down to 14, Scotland's defence continued to hold firm and survived the 10-minute period without conceding further as Kennedy returned. Towards the end of the opening 40 piled pressure on the visitors' line, with the Italians forced to infringe this time.

After conceding a number of penalties, Italy lost both Valentina Ruzza and Elsa Giordano to the sin-bin on the stroke of half-time.

Munro's charges took immediate advantage,

lock Sarah Bonar returning from injury to score her first international try, and with goalkicking hooker Lana Skeldon converting, the scores were level at the break at 7-7.

Italy started the second half stronger, spending 10 minutes in Scotland's 22m before scoring their second try through Giada Franco, who found a gap through the Scottish defence. Elena Sillari, as she had done with their opening score, added the conversion to restore Italy's seven-point cushion.

Scotland, though, bounced back immediately and forced Italy onto the back foot, piling pressure on the Azzurre who could only give away penalties to try and stop their hosts mounting any real pressure.

The result hung in the balance until six minutes from the end, when a third Italian try sealed their victory – a breakaway from Giada Franco found Beatrice Rigoni, and the centre dived over. Sillari converted again to all-but put the game outwith Scotland's reach.

There was time for Italy to grab a bonus point through Giordano, as Scotland's campaign got off to a disappointing start.

Post-match, Munro hailed the improvements in the Scottish scrum, partly aided by Alasdair Dickinson's involvement in the coaching set-up, while praising the first-half defensive effort: "In the first half we had to defend on our line for a time and did that really well. In the second half, our play got a wee bit more predictable and

the Italians defended really well.

"Eventually we just ran out of steam.

We left a couple of tries out there. We made a few mistakes, and that handed a lot of possession to Italy. But the defence was excellent, and the commitment was tremendous."

Scotland Women: 15 Chloe Rolлие, 14 Liz Musgrove, 13 Hannah Smith, 12 Lisa Thomson (captain), 11 Annabel Sergeant, 10 Helen Nelson, 9 Mhairi Grieve; 1 Lisa Cockburn, 2 Lana Skeldon, 3 Megan Kennedy, 4 Emma Wassell, 5 Sarah Bonar, 6 Rachel Malcolm, 7 Rachel McLachlan, 8 Siobhan Cattigan

Replacements: 16 Jodie Rettie (Skeldon 76'), 17 Katie Dougan, 18 Jemma Forsyth (McLachlan 13-22'; Kennedy 65'), 19 Sophie Anderson (McLachlan 68'), 20 Nicola Howat, 21 Sarah Law (Grieve 47'), 22 Lisa Martin (Smith 68'), 23 Rhona Lloyd (Sergeant 57')

SCOTLAND WOMEN 7 ITALY WOMEN 28

SCOTLAND SCORERS

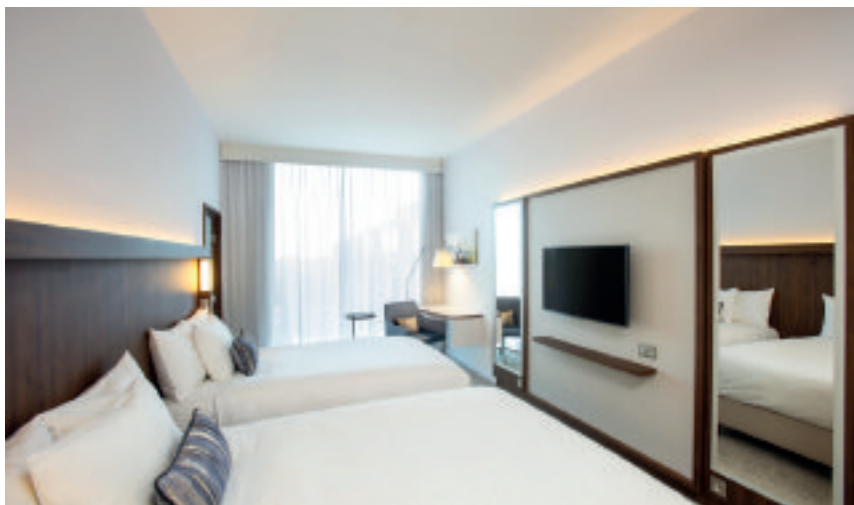
TRIES: BONAR

CONS: SKELDON

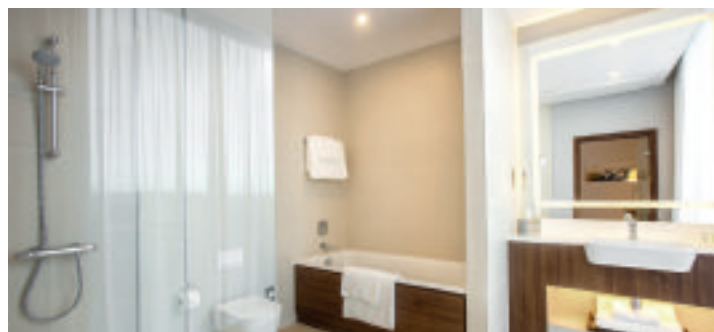
ITALY SCORERS

TRIES: ARRIGHETTI, FRANCO, RIGONI, GIORDANO

CONS: SILLARI (4)



MAKING A 'HOME FROM HOME' FOR SPORTS STARS



Since its opening three years ago, Oriam at Heriot-Watt University has become the hub to a host of sports teams.

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Will Macpherson has been general manager at the hotel since it opened, and he explained how the idea for a hotel within the site on the university campus initially came about.

"The plan for Oriam was to have a hotel to work alongside Oriam, when it was built. We're not owned by Oriam or the university, it was a complete separate commercial entity, but the idea was to have a hotel designed for sports people, so when they were training/using the facilities, they had somewhere to stay as well.

"Having that niche made it important we worked with Oriam to give the sports team the best possible experience and not just rely on our location."

The fourth floor of the hotel has been specially designed for use by sports teams.

Will continued: "We have 18 large double-double rooms have full baths and showers, the ceiling height is an extra two and a half feet higher than the rest of the hotel, to allow for bigger people.

"Up on that fourth floor, they have their own multi-purpose meeting room, which they can use for eating or relaxation, also with a dedicated physio room up there.

"The whole hotel is designed with sports in mind, and that's how it came along. We opened in November 2017, so roughly a year and a bit after Oriam, and since then, the sport has been a core of our business."

While sports-related business is what sets the hotel apart, Will added that it only makes up around a quarter of their business. "It's not really enough and that's why we are a commercial hotel, so we've got corporate business from Gogarburn, from Edinburgh Park, The Gyle, the airport," he added.

"We are a good option for Edinburgh too, considering the bus links into the city, so we also enjoy leisure business. I think from that respect, it's good that we're not just relying on one segment all the time. It is the sport that is the main focus, but we do a bit of everything really."

Will also praised Head Chef Stewart Campbell for his work in ensuring meals

are provided for sports teams in line with their dietary requirements.

"Some teams give their own menus, and we give input into that, where as other teams ask us to create the menus from scratch. Like any hotel, we've got a base restaurant bar menu which comes out the kitchen and that's fine, the majority of sports stuff is done in private dining rooms, or conference rooms, and that's done mainly through buffet format.

Will was also keen to stress that making it a 'home from home' for players – particularly those who are spending long periods at the hotel - is vital.

He said: "We always have a thorough debrief after stays, so we can find out what the teams liked, what could be improved, because we want to make their experience as easy and as positive as possible.

"The management for these teams spend so long on getting tactics right and instructions for different players, so when they go out on the pitch they know what to do, and I'd like to think we help with that, in making sure we don't give them any issues, that they don't need."

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Scotland's Guinness Six Nations campaign has - save for the second half at Twickenham - been one of disappointment, with three losses the poorest run under Gregor Townsend's leadership.

The campaign has been hugely hampered by a run of injuries to key men. Before the championship, Scotland were without a whole host of front-line players, with David Denton, Matt Scott, Mark Bennett, Duncan Taylor, Blade Thomson, Cornell Du Preez, Zander Fagerson, George Turner and Richie Gray among those on the treatment table when the championship kicked off.

Some returned during the championship, but Scotland's campaign was not helped by the loss of Stuart Hogg to a shoulder injury picked up during the Ireland match in round two, and Huw Jones and Ryan Wilson unable to take any further part thereafter.

Scotland lost Sean Maitland and Finn Russell for part of the championship, while Blair Kinghorn and Tommy Seymour saw their involvements ended in the defeat to Wales.

The list of players unavailable to Gregor Townsend remains a lengthy one; but this year's Guinness Six Nations has given the



Duncan Taylor is due back in the summer

SQUAD DEPTH DEEPENED BY SIX NATIONS INJURY CRISIS

Scotland Head Coach an opportunity to develop young talents such as Blair Kinghorn and Darcy Graham, while the likes of Sam Johnson, Nick Grigg and Magnus Bradbury have had chances to stake their claim at international level.

The players currently on the injured list should all be back in time to put their hand

up for selection for the Rugby World Cup, so Townsend may have an even wider pool of players to select from than he had anticipated.

While Scotland finished the Guinness Six Nations with just one win, and picked up a raft of injuries, it may all not be bad news for the development of the squad in the longer term.

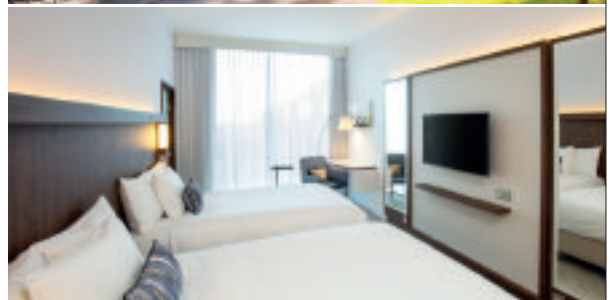
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Greig Laidlaw admitted he was both “disappointed” and “frustrated” as Scotland slipped to a 13-22 defeat to Ireland in round two of the Guinness Six Nations at BT Murrayfield.

The Scotland captain picked out “a few soft moments” in the match that he said “allowed Ireland to score” but praised the visitors for taking the opportunities presented to them.

He said: “We kept turning possession over. When we gave Ireland a set-piece they were able to exit their half and it’s always difficult when you’re trying to score from deep.”

Scotland started the match well, and Laidlaw opened the scoring with a penalty before Ireland struck – a seemingly straightforward kick through wasn’t dealt with by Tommy Seymour and Sean Maitland, the former firing a pass over the head of the recalled Saracens man, Connor Murray scored.

Scotland had their moments – Sam Johnson once more looked lively in midfield and Stuart Hogg was his usual threat on counter-attack ball, before he had to leave the field in the first quarter with a shoulder knock, while Ryan Wilson and Jonny Gray – another of four returning players – put themselves about in the tight exchanges.

Scotland enjoyed the majority of possession in the first 20 minutes but slack defending allowed Ireland in for their second try, an inside ball freeing Jacob Stockdale and the Ulster winger raced past the would-be tackle of Stuart McInally and under the posts.

The hosts needed a route back into the game and were handed on by Joey Carberry, who had replaced the injured Jonny Sexton – targeted by Scottish forwards at will before he was forced off with a head injury. Carberry’s pass was intercepted off by Finn Russell and the Scotland stand-off broke for the line, only to be chased down and stopped by Keith Earls’ superb tackle.

Russell, though, offloaded and found Johnson, who crossed for his first Test try. Laidlaw converted and Scotland were only two points (10-12) adrift at the break.

The Captain added: “We were in a good position at half-time but our performance in the second half has cost us the game. The soft tries cost us badly.”

In the second half, Scotland were unable to impose themselves as an attacking threat and Ireland – through their scrum and pack power – took control of the game.



SCOTTISH MISTAKES PUNISHED BY IRELAND

Wilson followed his Glasgow Warriors colleague Hogg off at half-time, and that was the end of his championship, knee ligament injury ruling him out of the remaining three games. He was missed among the pack’s effort, while McInally and Ritchie did their best at the breakdown but were unable to get their hands on the ball regularly enough to stop the flow of Irish attacks.

The hosts also found themselves on the wrong end of the penalty count, and Laidlaw said in the immediate aftermath that French referee Romain Poite “must not like” Scotland. “We’re not going to blame him, though,” he added.

Keith Earls scored a second-half try to take the game away from Scotland, although Laidlaw kicked a second-half penalty, Carberry’s late effort took the gap out to nine points and left Scotland empty-handed, while also condemning them to a first home Six Nations defeat under Townsend.

Townsend said during the week that Scotland would require a

performance nearing their best of his tenure to beat the defending champions, but his side showed only brief glimpses of their full potential as they fell away in the second half.

“We just need to be patient,” Laidlaw reflected. “The effort was unbelievable – the energy in our defence for large parts was brilliant.”

TScotland: 15 Stuart Hogg, 14 Tommy Seymour, 13 Huw Jones, 12 Sam Johnson, 11 Sean Maitland, 10 Finn Russell, 9 Greig Laidlaw CAPTAIN; 1 Allan Dell, 2 Stuart McInally, 3 Simon Berghan, 4

Grant Gilchrist, 5 Jonny Gray, 6 Ryan Wilson, 7 Jamie Ritchie, 8 Josh Strauss

Replacements: 16 Fraser Brown (McInally 64’), 17 Jamie Bhatti (Dell 69’), 18 D’arcy Rae (Berghan 63’), 19 Ben Toolis, 20 Rob Harley (Ritchie 35-40’; Wilson 40’), 21 Ali Price (Laidlaw 69’), 22 Peter Horne (Johnson 64’), 23 Blair Kinghorn (Hogg 16’)

Ireland: 15 Rob Kearney, 14 Keith Earls, 13 Chris Farrell, 12 Bundee Aki, 11 Jacob Stockdale, 10 Jonathan Sexton, 9 Connor Murray; 1 Cian Healy, 2 Rory Best CAPTAIN, 3 Tadhg Furlong, 4 James Ryan, 5 Quinn Roux, 6 Peter O’Mahony, 7 Sean O’Brien, 8 Jack Conan

Replacements: 16 Sean Cronin (Best 72’), 17 Dave Kilcoyne (Healy 57’), 18 Andrew Porter (Furlong 68’), 19 Ultan Dillane (Roux 68’), 20 Josh van der Flier (O’Brien 64’), 21 John Cooney (Murray 77’), 22 Joey Carberry (Sexton 24’), 23 Jordan Larmour (Stockdale 72’)

SCOTLAND 13 IRELAND 22

SCOTLAND SCORERS

TRIES: JOHNSON

CONS: LAIDLAW

PENS: LAIDLAW

IRELAND SCORERS

TRIES: MURRAY, STOCKDALE, EARLS

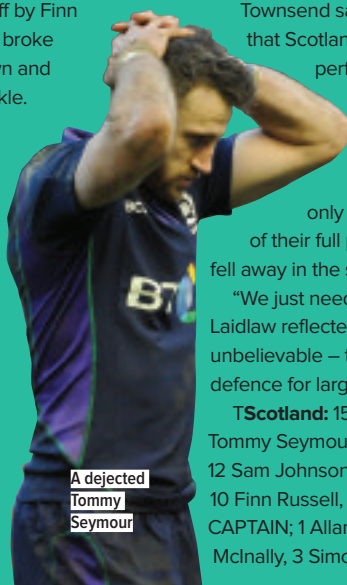
CONS: MURRAY, CARBERRY

PENS: CARBERRY

ATTENDANCE: 67,144

MAN OF THE MATCH

PETER O’MAHONY



A dejected Tommy Seymour



SCOTLAND WOMEN 'NOT GOOD ENOUGH' IN DEFEAT TO IRELAND

Head Coach Shade Munro said his Scotland Women side simply were not good enough after their 22-5 defeat to Ireland at Scotstoun in round two of their Six Nations campaign.

It took Scotland almost ten minutes to click and get their game underway; and in the meantime, Ireland scored a fifth-minute try through lock Aoife McDermott.

When Munro's side finally got into their stride, they managed to gain territory, seeing their effort rewarded when Hannah Smith found the gap through the Irish defence and dotted down.

"Apart from the Canada game, when we make a mistake at the beginning of the game we let ourselves become affected," said Munro.

"We were not good enough to be honest. The learnings we got from the game against Italy, we did not put them into place at all.

"We just didn't start well, and we never seemed able to get out of that. At periods we defended well but we've seen this before, 10, 12 phases then they score. We've got to be stopping the opposition scoring, it's a team mind-set, not individual.

"As a team we've got to learn that we need to be a bit more relentless in what we do, we need to take the game by the scruff of the neck rather than just

hoping that its going to go well."

In the second quarter, Ireland had most of the possession and in the last minutes started piling pressure on Scotland's defence, which finally crumbled when the clock was already red. It was tighthead prop Leah Lyons, this time, who scored after several pick-and-go's.

Down 5-10 at half-time, Scotland needed to hit the ground running, but as Munro explained, they failed to do so. "We did not execute what we talked about," continued Munro.

"We did not put into practice what we talked about in the dressing room at half time, was it because what Ireland were doing? They deserved to win, but that wasn't the reason."

It was Ireland, though, who found the way to score first in the second half, extending their lead to ten points (5-15) when Alison Miller dived over, giving Scotland a mountain to climb.

"We have the potential to be a better team, we just did not execute what we were trying to do tonight," added hooker Lana Skeldon. She continued: "It is not an excuse, at all, but it comes also down to a lack of experience, we're trying to develop these young players who are definitely capable and good enough to do it, it's just the composure and the mind-set aspects where we're struggling at the moment, we need to get the inexperienced players up to the right standard, mentally."

Ireland continued to pile on pressure, scoring the fourth try through Caplice. Fowley converted to put Ireland 5-22 ahead – and virtually ending the game with a quarter still to play.

Scotland Women: 15 Chloe Rollic, 14 Liz Musgrove, 13 Hannah Smith, 12 Lisa Thomson (captain), 11 Annabel Sergeant, 10 Helen Nelson, 9 Mhairi Grieve; 1 Lisa Cockburn, 2 Lana Skeldon, 3 Megan Kennedy, 4 Emma Wassell, 5 Deborah McCormack, 6 Rachel Malcolm, 7 Rachel McLachlan, 8 Sarah Bonar.

Replacements: 16 Jodie Rettie (McLachlan 66'), 17 Katie Dougan, 18 Jemma Forsyth (Cockburn 69'), 19 Sophie Anderson (Malcolm 76'), 20 Nicola Howat (McCormack, 41') 21 Sarah Law (Grieve 51'), 22 Lisa Martin (Nelson 68'), 23 Rhona Lloyd (Musgrove 59')

IRELAND WOMEN 22 SCOTLAND WOMEN 5

SCOTLAND SCORERS

TRY: SMITH

IRELAND SCORERS

TRIES: MCDERMOTT, LYONS,
MILLER, CAPLICE
CONS: FOWLEY

Where do you watch Rugby?

Murrayfield or the comfort of your own home?

Kathy Crombie, Communication and Marketing Manager with Bield shares her preference.



I moved to Scotland 21 years ago. Before then I hadn't a clue about Rugby. In Yorkshire everyone watches Football or Rugby League. I'd no idea what the difference was until my Scottish husband shared his passion for the game of Rugby Union. Despite his best endeavours I still didn't understand the tactics and scoring. For years I was blissfully ignorant.

That was until I was educated by 9 year old Ben, a friend's son. A graduate of rugby tot's Ben is a great rugby player regularly playing for his local team. A few months ago he managed to explain the scoring to me in a language I understood. He did shake his head a time or two at the daft questions I asked.

An English woman married to a Scot is a rather interesting mix, especially during the 6 nations. The first match I watched featuring the two nations was in the pub (Cask and Barrel in Broughton Street). It was amazing. I couldn't move for the crowds of blue shirts. I loved it.

Even though I'm not a Rugby fan I love watching the game. Everyone is so passionate. They talk and shout at the TV telling the referee how to do his job, holding their heads whilst groaning away. Unless of course the game is going in favour of the home nation at Murrayfield. You can hear the cheers from miles around.

The following year I went along to Murrayfield. It was, to use the Scots phrase 'Baltic'. The atmosphere was fantastic, the crowds from both teams walking back after the match enjoying the banter like friends not foes.

And then I've watched many more matches at home. Highly amused at the antics of my husband. His ability to have a one way conversation with the referee never ceases to amaze me. Then there's the thumping the sofa activity which can be quickly followed by leaping up and down when his team scores. He's passionate I'll say that for him.

I stayed home during the Autumn Internationals whilst husband accompanied Ben and his Dad to Murrayfield. They loved it.

And so did I. From the comfort of a warm living room with coffee and cake. I even understood the scoring.

I'll head back to Murrayfield in the future. Maybe when Ben appears in the line-up for Scotland.

For the six nations, like many of our tenants I'll be glued to the television. Cheering on the blue team.



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PARISIAN PAIN CONTINUES FOR SORRY SCOTLAND

Scotland travelled to Paris for round three missing Stuart Hogg, Ryan Wilson, Huw Jones and Finn Russell, all ruled out injured and joining an extensive list of absentees not available to Gregor Townsend.

Despite the loss of key players, there was a feeling of optimism that Scotland could end their 20-year wait for a win in the French capital, bolstered further by two disappointing showings and defeats-for Les Bleus in the opening two rounds.

Scotland, though, got off to a slow start as France dominated both territory and possession early on. In the seventh minute, wing Damian Penaud thought he'd opened the scoring, only for TMO Rowan Kitt to chalk off his try and bring play back for an earlier knock-on.

Scotland appeared shell-shocked and struggled to get going in the first quarter, which drew to a close with the hosts' first try, a superb length-of-the-field score started by fullback Thomas Ramos and finished off by his Toulouse colleague Romain Ntamack. Ramos converted, and landed a penalty soon after, to put Jacques Brunel's side 10-0 to the good.

Greig Laidlaw kicked a notable penalty to cut the gap to seven-the kick also saw the Scotland captain overtake Gavin Hastings in second place in the all-time Scotland points scorers list.

Gael Fickou became the second French player denied a try by the TMO before the hosts lost wing Yoann Huget to the sin-bin.

Scotland failed to take advantage - they never looked like scoring a try in the opening

40 minutes-the loss of Russell, Jones and Hogg, key orchestrators in the Scottish attack-was keenly felt in the Parisian sunshine.

Scoring first in the second period would've put Scotland right back in contention. Instead, another breakaway that would've had French fans dreaming of yesteryear saw Les Bleus strengthen their grip on the contest; Huget the scorer.

It was proving to be a torrid afternoon for a Scottish side bereft of so many front-line players and seemingly devoid of confidence. Townsend introduced six players all at once from the bench, and of the half-dozen that were introduced, Adam Hastings and Gary Graham made notable impacts, and Ali Price gave Scotland hope with a late try.

France, though, sealed victory with two late tries from replacement Gregory Allidritt as Scotland's wait for a first-ever Six Nations win in Paris goes on.

Scotland: 15 Blair Kinghorn, 14 Tommy Seymour, 13 Nick Grigg, 12 Sam Johnson, 11 Sean Maitland, 10 Peter Horne, 9 Greig Laidlaw (captain); 1 Allan Dell, 2 Stuart McInally, 3 Simon Berghan, 4 Grant Gilchrist, 5 Jonny Gray, 6 Magnus Bradbury, 7 Jamie Ritchie, 8 Josh Strauss

Replacements: 16 Fraser Brown (McInally 65'), 17 Alex Allan (Dell 65'), 18 Zander Fagerson (Berghan 65'), 19 Ben Toolis (Gray 65'), 20 Gary Graham (Strauss 65'), 21 Ali Price (Laidlaw 65'), 22 Adam Hastings (Horne 44'; Johnson 54'), 23 Darcy Graham (Maitland 65')

France: 15 Thomas Ramos, 14 Damian Penaud, 13 Mathieu Bastareaud, 12 Gael Fickou, 11 Yoann Huget, 10 Romain Ntamack, 9 Antoine Dupont; 1 Jefferson Poirot, 2 Guilhem Guirado, 3 Demba Bamba, 4 Sebastien Vahaamahina, 5 Felix Lambey, 6 Wenceslas Lauret, 7 Arthur Iturria, 8 Louis Picamoles.

Replacements: 16 Camille Chat (Guirado 70'), 17 Etienne Falgoux (Poirot 70'), 18 Dorian Aldegheri (Bamba 70'), 19 Paul Willemse (Lambey 66'), 20 Gregory Allidritt (Picamoles 70'), 21 Baptiste Serin (Dupont 70'), 22 Anthony Belleau (Ntamack 77'), 23 Maxime Medard (Ramos 70')

FRANCE 27-10 SCOTLAND

FRANCE SCORERS

TRIES: ALLDRITT (2), NTAMACK, HUGET

CONS: RAMOS, SERIN

PENS: RAMOS

SCOTLAND SCORERS

TRIES: PRICE

CONS: HASTINGS

PENS: LAIDLAW

ATTENDANCE: 80,000

MAN OF THE MATCH

DEMBA BAMBA

Scotland Women put in a much-improved performance and scored their first try against France in nine years, but were well beaten by the 2018 Women's Six Nations champions in front of a crowd of more than 8,000 in Lille.

The hosts took just eight minutes to open the scoring and added a second after quarter of an hour to open up a 10-point lead, before winger Rhona Lloyd went over for the visitors, rounding off a period of pressure by diving over out wide after Hannah Smith's offload.

Thereafter, Scotland held out until seven minutes before the break, when France crossed for their third try to ensure they led 24-5 at half-time.

The second half started with strong attacking phases from both teams and Scotland's defensive effort saw them keep France at bay until 10 minutes into the second period, but two tries in three minutes saw their lead extend to 36-5.

Scotland hit back with a second try with 13 minutes left, lock Emma Wassell barging her way over from close range, but the hosts had the final say as they crossed a final time just before the end.

Despite a heavy defeat, Head Coach Shade Munro was proud of his players' effort.

He said: "We knew how tough a task it was going to be against a top three team like France. We prepared well going into it.

"We hadn't won our first two games, so it was important that we got a really big effort from the team. They tried extremely hard throughout that game and never gave up.

"When you are up against teams as good as France are, they certainly punish you in certain areas, but we challenged them in areas too. We can be proud of the effort that we put in."

Scotland Women: 15 Chloe Rollic, 14 Rhona Lloyd, 13 Hannah Smith, 12 Lisa Thomson (captain), 11 Annabel Sergeant, 10 Helen Nelson, 9 Sarah Law; 1 Lisa Cockburn, 2 Lana Skeldon, 3 Megan Kennedy, 4 Emma Wassell, 5 Nicola Howat, 6 Sarah Bonar, 7 Rachel McLachlan, 8 Jade Konkel.

SCOTLAND 10-41 FRANCE

SCOTLAND SCORERS

TRIES: LLOYD, WASSELL

FRANCE SCORERS

TRIES: VERNIER (3), BOURDON, BOUJARD, JASON, CONSTANTY
CONS: BOURDON (3)

Replacements: 16 Jodie Rettie (Howat 51'), 17 Katie Dougan (Cockburn 61'), 18 Mairi Forsyth (Kennedy 75'), 19 Lucy Winter (McLachlan 75'), 20 Deborah McCormack (Konkel 74'), 21 Jenny Maxwell (Law 49'), 22 Lisa Martin (Thomson 74'), 23 Abi Evans (Sergeant 75')

TWO TRIES FOR SCOTLAND WOMEN IN HEAVY DEFEAT TO DEFENDING CHAMPIONS





JAPAN RUGBY WORLD CUP 2019: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

While we're not getting the suitcases and Saltire flags out just yet, there's only six months to go until the Rugby World Cup! As the tournament draws closer, our team of Japan rugby travel experts have been inundated with questions.

There are some things you'll only appreciate when you arrive; from train station jingles and endless bowing, to the highest of high-tech toilets – who knew going to the loo could be such an experience? Until then, we'll tell you what you can expect.

What's the best pre-match food and drink?

Former Kobe resident, and Rugby Travel Consultant, Kester says: "Scotland's matches are perfectly placed for trying great food. You may well have heard of Kobe beef - with a rich flavour and marbled texture it's internationally renowned but can only be found in its namesake port city. Don't miss the chance to try it before the Samoa match."

You also can't go far wrong in Yokohama, according to Rugby Travel Consultant Rachel Rykala. "Japan's second largest city is home to some of the country's best ramen. Ramen noodles topped with juicy pork cuts is one of my favourite dishes, and few places have as many options as in Yokohama. For the perfect fuel ahead of the Ireland or Japan matches, go

for lunch at the city's ramen museum".

And for drink? "Well, you won't be short of strong sake or beer on tap wherever you go, but if you're heading to the Russia game and want a beer break, you're sure of a good brew in Shizuoka – it's home to a lush landscape of tea plantations".

When should I arrive on match day?

Having watched countless rugby matches in Japan, Tour Leader Ben Walker recommends arriving three hours before kick-off, "it gives you chance to enjoy the atmosphere outside the games and avoid slow queues and mounting traffic. Also, if you like a beer with the game, you have time to stock up, so you don't have to leave your seat when it starts".

Is it easy to get internet access on your phone?

It can be surprisingly tricky to access the internet in Japan. Aya Inoue, from the InsideJapan Operations team, thinks hiring a portable Wi-Fi device is a must. "You'll be surprised how hard it is to get a Wi-Fi connection, even in a big city. With your own device you can be spontaneous and go wandering without worrying about where to find your next connection".

Does it matter that I don't speak Japanese?

Japanese people won't expect you to be fluent, but Rugby Travel Consultant Benjamin Guest thinks it's always worth learning a few basic phrases. "Japanese is a very phrasal language so it's a lot easier than it sounds. A sentence or two may help you make a few friends when watching the game – after a couple of beers and a few near misses you'll be chatting away like a local in no time.

Having someone on the other end of the phone who speaks Japanese, such as our Customer Support team, can be invaluable and put your mind at ease, especially in an emergency, but it's in the Japanese nature to help, regardless of language barriers".

Have questions of your own?

Don't hesitate to get in touch! At Japan Rugby Travel we can work with any combination of tickets to tailor-make a bespoke itinerary including accommodation, domestic transport and fun Japanese experiences. Prices start from around £2,650 per person for two pool matches (excl. tickets)*

*Subject to availability

Please note, match tickets are not included in Japan Rugby Travel packages

For more information:

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SCOTS UNABLE TO DERAIL WELSH GRAND SLAM CHARGE

Scotland fell to a second consecutive home Guinness Six Nations defeat, and third in this season's championship overall, as Wales continued their march towards a farewell Grand Slam for departing coach Warren Gatland with victory at BT Murrayfield.

Scotland's performance needed to be several levels better than the one they produced in Paris in round three, and it started with all the passion and endeavour you would expect in front of another capacity home crowd.

Finn Russell, who took the kicking duties with Greig Laidlaw dropped to the bench, landed a penalty to put Scotland ahead on 12 minutes, but immediately from the restart, Josh Adams scored the game's first try after rounding Scotland fullback Blair Kinghorn to touch down.

Russell cut the gap to a single point, but Scotland found themselves clinging on somewhat at half-time after Jonathan Davies scored Wales' second try of the half to extend their lead, while Gareth Anscombe also added a penalty.

Gatland's side, aiming to avenge defeat to Scotland on their last visit to Edinburgh, were nine points (6-15) ahead at the break as Scotland fans pondered missed opportunities and lamented even more injuries – to Kinghorn

and Tommy Seymour, the latter winning his 50th cap – which forced a backline reshuffle.

Whatever was said by Townsend and the coaches at half-time had an impact and Scotland started the second half stronger. A lovely move, and a glorious inside pass by Finn Russell, allowed Darcy Graham over for his first international try on his home debut.

The gap was down to four, and Scotland piled on the pressure thereafter as they sought to end their two-game winless run in the championship. Penalty after penalty followed inside the Welsh half, but no yellow card for the visitors, while skipper Stuart McInally turned down the posts on three occasions in favour of the corner.

It all came to nought, and Wales sealed victory with the game's final kick as Anscombe knocked over a penalty to ensure Wales' Grand Slam dream lived on to Super Saturday. For Scotland, another poor first half showing proved costly, as did the ever-rising injury count.

Scotland: 15 Blair Kinghorn (Hastings 31'), 14 Tommy Seymour (McGuigan 21'), 13 Nick Grigg, 12 Peter Horne, 11 Darcy Graham (Laidlaw 65'), 10 Finn Russell, 9 Ali Price; 1

SCOTLAND 11-18 WALES

SCOTLAND SCORERS

TRIES: GRAHAM

PENS: RUSSELL (2)

WALES SCORERS

TRIES: ADAMS, DAVIES

CONS: ANSCOMBE

PENS: ANSCOMBE (2)

ATTENDANCE: 67,144

MAN OF THE MATCH

HADLEIGH PARKES

Allan Dell, 2 Stuart McInally CAPTAIN (Brown 70'), 3 WP Nel (Berghan 65'), 4 Grant Gilchrist, 5 Jonny Gray (Toolis 65'), 6 Magnus Bradbury, 7 Jamie Ritchie, 8 Josh Strauss (Watson 65').

Wales: 15 Liam Williams (Biggar 47'), 14 George North, 13 Jonathan Davies, 12 Hadleigh Parkes (Watkin 75'), 11 Josh Adams, 10 Gareth Anscombe, 9 Gareth Davies (A. Davies 70'), 1 Rob Evans (Smith 62'), 2 Ken Owens (Dee 65'), 3 Tomas Francis (Lewis 65'), 4 Adam Beard (Ball 62'), 5 Alun Wyn Jones CAPTAIN, 6 Josh Navidi, 7 Justin Tipuric, 8 Ross Moriarty (Wainwright 70')



Scotland Women Head Coach Shade Munro admitted his side's last-gasp defeat to Wales at Scotstoun in round four was "very cruel."

The Scots were denied a first win of this season's championship by a last-minute try from number eight Siwan Lillicrap, while the conversion from Lleucu George saw Rowland Phillips' Wales side snatch victory.

Munro, though, was encouraged by Scotland's three tries - from Jade Konkel, Sarah Bonar and Chloe Rollie - but insists his side must keep learning.

Konkel and Bonar both powered over from close range in the first half, while Rollie's score with less than 10 minutes to go was superb - she collected Hannah Smith's offload following the centre's break, and rounded the Welsh covering defence to score.

Reflecting on the defeat, Scotland's fourth in a row in the championship, Munro said: "It's an 80-minute game. There were lots of elements that were not accurate but the commitment was there.

"It comes down to playing the conditions - we played them well in the first half, but we should have played more territory in the second half. Wales made it difficult but ultimately you want to play the game in their half."

Scotland started well and scored twice through the pack in the first half, Konkel and Bonar both going over for scores after good work by the Scotland forwards. Wales hit back with a penalty from stand-off Robyn Wilkins and took the lead when Bethan Lewis scored, with Wilkins converting.

Bonar's try on 20 minutes was the last score for nearly an hour until Rollie went over, but the match was played largely in the Scottish half in between times.

From the restart following Rollie's try, Scotland lost possession and Wales mounted a series of attacks that ended some four minutes later with Lillicrap's try, and George's match-winning conversion.

Konkel, Malcolm and Wassell were the stand-out performers in a superb Scottish effort, particularly in defence, with Loughborough Lightning back-row Malcolm a real menace for Wales at the breakdown. Behind the scrum, Mhairi Grieve offered a spark from scrum-half and skipper Thomson carried well throughout in dreadful conditions.

Post-match, Thomson was left to rue errors, but insisted the dropped restart following Rollie's try was not the reason for the defeat.

The 21-year-old from Hawick said: "It's not dropping the kick-off that's cost us, there were individual errors and team errors throughout the game that have cost us. We lost that game."



SCOTLAND 11-18 WALES

SCOTLAND SCORERS

TRIES: KONKEL, BONAR, ROLLIE

WALES SCORERS

TRIES: LEWIS, LILLCRAP

CONS: WILKINS, GEORGE

PENS: WILKINS

A 'CRUEL' DEFEAT FOR SCOTLAND WOMEN DESPITE VALIANT EFFORT



Scotland Women: 15 Chloe Rollie, 14 Rhona Lloyd, 13 Hannah Smith, 12 Lisa Thomson CAPTAIN, 11 Annabel Sergeant (Evans 73'), 10 Helen Nelson (Martin 55'), 9 Mhairi Grieve (Maxwell 55'); 1 Megan

Kennedy, 2 Lana Skeldon, 3 Mairi Forsyth (Cockburn 60'), 4 Emma Wassell, 5 Sarah Bonar, 6 Rachel Malcolm (Rettie 55'), 7 Rachel McLachlan, 8 Jade Konkel.



'UNUSUAL TREASURE' OF FOSSIL HUNTERS IN EDINBURGH

On the edge of Edinburgh's historic Grassmarket sits an unusual treasure. Mr Wood's Fossils was established in 1987 by Stan Wood, a famous fossil hunter responsible for a series of important discoveries throughout the hills and rivers of Scotland. Stan had a number of different jobs before finding a passion for palaeontology.

He turned out to be a natural, successfully returning to locations long since thought finished, while his intuition and dogged determination drove him to open fresh digs of his own. He worked for a couple of museums before setting up independently, providing museums and academic bodies with dozens of new species and evolutionary significant specimens. Visitors to his collection would often ask why he hadn't opened a shop, so eventually he did.

Stan much preferred to be out in the field with his hammer, though, and hired a manager to take care of the shop in his stead. The third of these managers was Matt Dale, who had studied geology at Glasgow University then worked with fossil collections in museums

before moving back to his home town of Edinburgh to work for Stan. Matt bought the business from Stan after a few years and his geological background is helpful when answering questions from customers.

There's a global trade in fossils, but it's a relatively small market, and people are often a little taken aback to come across a fossil shop, let alone be able to buy things they may previously have only seen in a museum. Prices are also a pleasant surprise – there's plenty for every budget.

When the business first began, Stan found it difficult to fill the shelves with a range of varied lines. Mr Wood's Fossils has grown in the decades since, expanding its spectrum and founding an international reputation for quality by constantly looking for new sources and interesting stock. Matt travels to trade fairs to buy – getting to meet the people that dig and prepare the fossils he sells gives him a fascinating backstory for many of the sites.

It also ensures prices are kept to a minimum and the standard kept high as he hand-picks every specimen where possible. Over the years, he's built a broad network of suppliers,

with a handful of UK-based wholesalers, two or three annual trade shows and a few friends around the world that can send a box of delights from time to time.

There's a lot to take in – not just fossils, but minerals, meteorites and jewellery too – so a tour of the shop can take a little while. Browsers are very welcome, and the staff are used to questions, so don't be afraid to ask. The shop isn't aimed at geologists or collectors – there's something for everyone.

A mixture of the fascinating and the fabulous. Dinosaur eggshell, beautiful fish, huge megalodon teeth, perfect ammonites, ancient trilobites, but also sparkling and colourful crystals and rocks that have hurtled through space for billions of years. Whether you want to fire the kids' imaginations, find the perfect piece for the spot above the fireplace, or unearth that unusual, memorable gift, this place is well worth the visit.

Mr Wood's Fossils is open daily, from 10am to 5.30pm. For more information:
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SCOTLAND RETAIN CALCUTTA CUP AFTER ASTONISHING COMEBACK

Scotland produced one of the greatest comebacks in the history of the game, coming from 31-0 down thanks to a wonderful five-try second half performance as they retained the Calcutta Cup.

It was Scotland's best result at Twickenham since 1989, when they recorded a 12-12 draw, but it started in calamitous fashion.

Scotland were all over the place in the opening 40 minutes and England scored after just 66 seconds through Jack Nowell, before adding a second inside the opening 10 minutes through Tom Curry.

When Joe Launchbury crossed on 13 minutes, Scotland found themselves 19-0 down and staring down the barrel of another heavy defeat in south-west London.

Things got worse, too – Jonny May scored England's fourth try of a one-sided first half in which Scotland barely got out of their own half, except to kick off. It was 31-0 after half an hour.

Owen Farrell then had a kick charged down by opposing skipper Stuart McInally, and the Scotland hooker raced clear from half-way to score. At that stage, it seemed it would be merely consolation.

However, what unfolded in the

second 40 minutes was quite remarkable, as a rejuvenated Scotland turned the game on its head.

Darcy Graham scored the first of his two tries seven minutes into the second period, before Magnus Bradbury crossed for a third Scottish try two minutes after.

In a complete role-reversal from the first half, England were struggling to contain the now-rampant Scots, and when Graham scored his second just before the hour, the gap was back to seven points (31-24).

A minute later, Scotland were level – Man of the Match Finn Russell intercepted Farrell's pass and sprinted clear to score; Laidlaw's conversion tying the game.

One of the most remarkable comebacks in sporting history was seemingly completed by Sam Johnson, the recalled Australian-born centre scampering home after a wondrous pass from the magnificent Russell.

But more drama followed, as Scotland were denied a famous win by George Ford, who crossed in injury time, and converted, to end the game a draw – the highest-scoring drawn Test match of all time.

Post-match, Scotland Head Coach Gregor Townsend said he was "more than

proud" of the players' second-half effort.

He said: "We showed a lot of character today and to respond in the way we did in the second half, I was more than proud.

"We set a goal of winning the second half, not the game, we thought that was gone when you're 31-7 down, but it's amazing what can happen in a game of rugby.

"We're the team that's really disappointed to have drawn the game."

England: 15 Elliot Daly, 14 Jack Nowell, 13 Henry Slade, 12 Manu Tuilagi (Te'o 77'), 11 Jonny May, 10 Owen Farrell CAPTAIN (Ford 69'), 9 Ben Youngs (Spencer 73'); 1 Ben Moon (Genge 4'), 2 Jamie George (Cowan-Dickie 73'), 3 Kyle Sinckler (Cole 51'), 4 Joe Launchbury (Hughes 73'), 5 George Kruis, 6 Mark Wilson (Shields 61'), 7 Tom Curry, 8 Billy Vunipola

Scotland: 15 Sean Maitland (Hastings 67'), 14 Darcy Graham, 13 Nick Grigg (Harris 56'), 12 Sam Johnson, 11 Byron McGuigan, 10 Finn Russell, 9 Ali Price (Laidlaw 56'); 1 Allan Dell (Reid 44'), 2 Stuart McInally CAPTAIN (Brown 56'), 3 WP Nel (Berghan 60'), 4 Ben Toolis, 5 Grant Gilchrist (J Gray 56'), 6 Sam Skinner (Strauss 56'), 7 Hamish Watson, 8 Magnus Bradbury

ENGLAND 38-38 SCOTLAND

ENGLAND SCORERS

TRIES: NOWELL, CURRY, LAUNCHBURY, MAY, FORD

CONS: FARRELL (4), FORD

PENS: FARRELL

SCOTLAND SCORERS

TRIES: GRAHAM (2), MCINALLY, BRADBURY, RUSSELL, JOHNSON

CONS: RUSSELL (2), LAIDLAW (2)

ATTENDANCE: 82,000

GUINNESS MAN OF THE MATCH:

FINN RUSSELL



SCOTLAND WOMEN OUTCLASSSED AS ENGLAND STORM TO GRAND SLAM

Scotland were thrashed 80-0 in their final game of the 2019 Women's Six Nations at Twickenham, as the home side stormed to the title and completed a Grand Slam.

England scored 12 tries without reply, with four coming inside the opening 16 minutes as they quickly took control of the game and wrapped up an early try bonus point.

A further three first-half scores followed, while Scotland's cause was not helped by the loss of captain Lisa Thomson to a yellow card for a deliberate knock-on.

It took England 10 minutes into the second period to get themselves on the board, but when they did, their eighth try took the Red Roses over the half-century of points.

England scored another four tries in the second 40 minutes to secure a big win, and the championship, while Scotland failed to get on the board despite the hosts losing stand-off Katy Daly-McLean for the final stages to a yellow card.

Post-match, Shade Munro heaped praise on the Grand Slam winners. He said: "England are a superb team. They have taken women's sport, not just women's rugby to the next level.

"We are not at the level they are, and

that is not without lack of trying. They put us under pressure at every facet of the game. It is the games like Italy, Ireland and Wales that we need to get closer to and that is what we will be focusing on next season.

"Ultimately that will hopefully get us closer to teams like England."

Scotland Women

15. Chloe Rollic, 14. Rhona Lloyd, 13. Hannah Smith, 12. Lisa Thomson CAPTAIN 11. Annabel Sergeant (Evans 61'), 10. Helen Nelson (Martin 51'), 9. Jenny Maxwell (Grieve 51'), 1. Megan Kennedy (Cockburn 40'), 2. Lana Skeldon (McLachlan 70'), 3. Mairi Forsyth (Dougan 70'), 4. Emma Wassell, 5. Nicola Howat (Muzambe 75'), 6. Sarah Bonar (McCormack 72'), 7. Rachel McLachlan (Rettie 66'), 8. Jade Konkel

ENGLAND WOMEN 80-0 SCOTLAND WOMEN

ENGLAND WOMEN SCORERS

TRIES: BREACH (2), CLEALL (2), BECKETT, HUNT, SMITH, COIKAYNE, BERN, HUNTER, SCARRATT, O'DONNELL
CONS: DALEY-MCLEAN (9), SCARRATT



SCOTLAND PLAYER REPORT CARD *2019 GUINNESS SIX NATIONS*



FORWARDS

Allan Dell: Has gone a long way to establishing himself as first choice in the number one jersey. Started all five games, produced a rampaging burst against Wales but scrum wobbles against Ireland. (6)

Jamie Bhatti: Off the bench in the first two games and has done what has been asked while not setting the heather on fire as he did in his breakthrough Autumn campaign. Lost his place for trip to France and did not feature again (4)

Alex Allan: Struggled at the set-piece in Paris and didn't feature thereafter (3)

Gordon Reid: Came on early in the second half of the Calcutta Cup mayhem. Shored up the Scottish scrum and played his part in an historic comeback (5)

Stuart McNally: A workhorse who is fast becoming one of the first names on the team sheet. His try sparked the Calcutta Cup comeback (8)

Fraser Brown: Came off the bench in three games but didn't look truly match fit and failed to reach his best (5)

Jake Kerr: Another debutant in the opening weekend's win over the Italians. First lineout throw went astray and seemed to knock his confidence. Brown's return meant he did not feature again (4)

WP Nel: Scrummaged superbly against the Italians before another injury struck

him down. Scotland's undoubted premier tighthead but can ill-afford another long run of injuries. Returned against Wales and retained place for Calcutta Cup without setting heather on fire (5)

Simon Berghan: Produced a couple of brilliant turnovers in cameos off the bench but struggled against Irish scrum when handed starting jersey. Great competition for tighthead berth (6)

D'arcy Rae: Given the chance to make his international debut against Ireland but struggled against the power of Dave Kilcoyne and offered little around the field. A good servant to Glasgow Warriors, but remains to be seen if he can deliver on the Test stage (3)

Zander Fagerson: Hurried back into the international fray to face France and struggled when he came on, both around the park and in the tight. Didn't feature again (3)

Ben Toolis: Started against the Italians and Scottish lineout ran well, while Edinburgh pairing of Toolis and Gilchrist linked up well. An unused replacement against Ireland and Wales, was deserving of his chance to start against England, and showed up well (6)

Grant Gilchrist: The Alloa-born Edinburgh man is getting back to the form that saw him made Scotland captain under Vern Cotter. He's established himself as a mainstay of the pack under Townsend and offers plenty of much-needed grunt (7)

Jonny Gray: Missed Italian win through injury and came back to feature in

each match thereafter. Won his 50th cap against Wales but dropped to the bench for Calcutta Cup – a quieter campaign than he'd have hoped for (5)

Sam Skinner: Injured early on against Italy but returned in Calcutta Cup. Equally able at lock or in the back-row, he seems certain to go to the World Cup (6)

Ryan Wilson: Hasn't had his best few months with Glasgow but certainly stepped up in the opening two games before injury ruled him out of the rest of the campaign. A strong ball carrier and got in the faces of Sexton and Murray before having to go off. His influence was missed thereafter. (7)

Gary Graham: Came on for the final stages of the win over Italy to win that elusive first cap, much to the delight of his dad George & the rest of clan Graham. Produced a barnstorming cameo off the bench against France, but didn't feature again (6)

Jamie Ritchie: Scotland fans everywhere will have been panicking when Hamish Watson was injured before the championship, but his Edinburgh colleague has stepped into the number 7 jersey superbly. Ritchie looks a classy operator at Test level and should be there for the long-haul (8)

Josh Strauss: A 17-month exile ended in the Autumn and by the spring, the Sale Sharks number eight looked like he'd never been away. His barnstorming ball-carrying and solid defensive work – including a Championship record 29 tackles against Ireland – have put him firmly back in the picture (7)



but had another off-day at Twickenham in the first half, before limping off (4)

Sean Maitland: Hailed by Townsend as one of the side's defensive leaders, Maitland's job is important but perhaps not the most flamboyant. Missed the win over Italy before returning in defeat to Ireland. Was caught out for one Irish try, but hard to apportion blame at his door (6)

Tommy Seymour: Quiet against the Italians, with Kinghorn taking the headlines before a horror moment against Ireland, firing a pass to Maitland that ended with Connor Murray scoring for the visitors. Injured against Wales - looks bereft of confidence and in need of a good run of games for Glasgow to rediscover some of his form that earned him a Lions place in 2017. (5)

Blair Kinghorn: Included against Italy with Maitland out injured and duly delivered with a hat-trick of tries – the first by a Scot in the Six Nations. Hugely unlucky to be left out against Ireland but appeared off the bench when Hogg was stricken. Missed tackle cost Scotland a try against Wales, and he dropped two high balls before limping off. An exciting talent but still plenty to work on (7)

Stuart Hogg: Excellent against the Italians, helping himself to a 19th Scotland try and he could have had another but for a controversial decision from referee Luke Pearce. Looked threatening early on against the Irish before he was forced off injured, and Scotland's attacking threat seemed to go with him. (7)

Byron McGuigan: Came off the bench against Wales and showed up well. Played his part in the Calcutta Cup comeback (6)

Darcy Graham: Made a big impact off the bench in Paris and started the final two matches, scoring his first Test try in the defeat to Wales. Physical similarities to Shane Williams – Scotland will hope the Hawick man can replicate Williams' international career. A real positive of the campaign (8)



Magnus Bradbury: Made his return from injury during the championship and started in Paris. Produced physical displays and gave Scotland much-needed 'go forward' – may well have played himself into World Cup contention (8)

Hamish Watson: Another to return from injury, Watson was superb off the bench against the Welsh and earned starting spot against England. Worked tirelessly to slow England's ball down, and in defence (8)

BACKS

Greig Laidlaw: Not a vintage championship for Laidlaw, who was dropped to the bench for the games with Wales and England. Still plenty to give to the group ahead of Rugby World Cup, and showed up well in the win over Italy (6)

Ali Price: Handed the starting jersey for the final two games, he failed to ignite the Scottish attack as he'd done in a try-scoring cameo in Paris. Two mistakes at costly times against Wales lose him a point (6)

Finn Russell: Immense in the Calcutta Cup win, and showed moments of brilliance throughout the championship – Scotland's attacking maestro is improving all the time (8)

Adam Hastings: Came on only for the final four minutes against the Azzuri and with Scotland under the cosh. Called upon in Paris, and then at fullback against Wales, the Glasgow man looked back to his best form. Unquestionably now Russell's deputy (6)

Peter Horne: Started the championship on the bench before he was handed the 10 jersey against France – that experiment didn't work and Horne was back in the centre for the Welsh match, before being dropped altogether for the finale. A good ball player but he and Johnson offer a similar style and the experiment at stand-off should now be shelved (4)

Sam Johnson: Looked assured on his international debut against a weak Italian side but stepped up further to score his first Scotland try in defeat to Ireland. Struggled in France, but scored against England, but another useful ball playing centre (8)

Huw Jones: Hasn't really hit the heights we know he's capable of in the last 12 months and looked well short of match fitness in the opening two games before injury struck once more, ruling him out of the remainder. Needs a run of games before the Rugby World Cup (4)

Chris Harris: Someone Townsend rates very highly. A cameo off the bench led to his first Test try against the Italians but wasn't involved until a 15-minute cameo off the bench in the latter stages of the Calcutta Cup match (5)

Nick Grigg: Brought in for the trip to Paris, Grigg struggled badly to get into the game. Faired slightly better against Wales





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ONE WIN BUT PLENTY OF POSITIVES FOR YOUNG SCOTS

Scotland U20 may have only recorded one win in their Six Nations campaign, but the triumph over Wales at Meggetland showed exactly what the squad was capable of and should fill them with confidence going into this year's World Rugby U20 Championship.

Carl Hogg's side kicked off their Six Nations campaign in disappointing fashion, falling to a 10-point defeat at the hands of their Italian counterparts at Netherdale. The U20s were 11 points down before Ross Thompson's penalty sparked a comeback that also saw captain Connor Boyle and Charlie Jupp score tries within three minutes of each other to hand Scotland the lead.

Italy reasserted themselves in the match, but Scotland gave themselves hope of snatching victory when Rufus McLean scored late on, but it was not to be as a late Italian try sealed victory.

Post-match Hogg said: "Because our error count was so high, it's hard to maintain intensity. We came into the game wanting to play at speed but our error count was high

and it was difficult to maintain that. A lot of our errors came from simple, basic things."

The Head Coach was, though, encouraged by parts of his side's performance.

"When we get it right, we look like a good rugby side. We just didn't get it right for the 80-minute period, we probably had a 20-minute window of what this group can achieve. There's definitely talent within this group," he added.

In round two, Scotland took on an Irish side that had beaten England in their championship opener, and in freezing conditions at Netherdale, Scotland struggled to deal with the speed and physicality of the visitors.

Harry Byrne kicked an early penalty, but the game's first try did not come until the half-hour when Dylan Tierney crossed, Byrne converting for a 10-0 half-time lead for the Irish.

Their advantage grew further early in the second half as John Hodnett scored, with Byrne once more converting for 17-0.

By the time Ewan Ashman dived over for Scotland's first – and only – points of the evening, the game was lost,

and Ireland rubber-stamped their win with Jonathan Wren's late score.

Post-match, Hogg said: "Ireland had the conditions first half and I thought it was more than a 10-point wind - we had opportunities in the first half but even at half-time I thought if we got some possession and territory we'd be in the game but I didn't think we managed the conditions to our benefit.

The Scotland U20 Head Coach said his side showed "glimpses" of their potential.

Round three saw Hogg's side make their first away trip of the campaign as they took on France in Pau.

The reigning World Rugby U20 Champions proved too strong for the young Scots, with Finn Russell's Racing 92 team-mate Jordan Joseph running in two tries from the back row.

Scotland gave a good account of themselves at times, though, and crossed for five tries of their own in the 42-27 defeat, with Jack Blain helping himself to a double; Ross Thompson, Robbie McCallum and Angus Fraser with the others.

After finding themselves 21-0 down, Hogg



SCOTLAND U20 2019 SIX NATIONS RESULTS

SCOTLAND U20 22-32 ITALY U20
SCOTLAND U20 5-24 IRELAND U20
FRANCE U20 42-27 SCOTLAND U20
SCOTLAND U20 27-20 WALES U20
ENGLAND U20 45-7 SCOTLAND U20

STAR MAN: CONNOR BOYLE

The Watsonians back-row has risen superbly to being handed the mantle of leading the side, and his performances throughout the championship have been superb. A try-scorer in the win over Wales and in defeat to Italy, the former Stewart's Melville man also proved a menace at the breakdown, while providing energy in defence.



praised his players for their effort in fighting back to take the lead early in the second half.

Hogg said: "We put in a huge shift to arrest that momentum and push it back in our favour but ultimately we made too many errors."

"It was certainly a step-up from the first two games in terms of the quality of the opposition."

Scotland's third and final home match of the campaign saw them take on Wales at Meggetland, and the young Scots produced a superb display to record their first win of this year's Six Nations.

Connor Boyle and Robbie McCallum scored early tries to put Hogg's side 12-0 to the good before two penalties halved the arrears. Further Scottish scores from Rory McMichael and Jack Blain pushed the hosts' lead out to 22-6, but Wales fought back and scored twice late on to set up a nervy finale.

But Scotland held on for victory, much to the delight of their Head Coach. He said: "Clearly this result will give us confidence but first and foremost the performance was good and the players trained very well the whole week."

"The key is to go and replicate that next week in what will be a massive challenge against England. We can go down there with confidence now, but what I'm most pleased at is that the players have that tangible reward for their hard work."

And in round five, Scotland put up a good fight for 50 minutes against their English counterparts but ran out of steam as England recorded a 45-7 win.

The hosts dominated both possession and territory, and Scotland's high tackle count caught up with them late on as England scored five tries in the final 25 minutes to take the game away from Hogg's side.

The Head Coach said: "We defended really well in the first half, but it was always going to take its toll. As I said to the boys afterwards, it's like being in a boxing match where we tied our hands behind our back and allowed them to punch us for 80 minutes."

THE HOME OF SEVENS GETTING SET FOR ANOTHER BIG YEAR



There is no official documentation that explains why, how and when it was decided that the abbreviated game of rugby was to be first played at The Greenyards, Melrose in April 1883.

However, there is no disputing that the suggestion came from Ned Haig an apprentice with local butcher David Sanderson - who was also a member of the winning team at the inaugural tournament.

His vision almost 140 years ago has created one of the most exciting and demanding team sports, loved the world over.

Information passed down through generations suggests that, in 1883 Melrose Football Club was looking for ideas to

help finances when the suggestion of a tournament was put forward by Ned, who was born at Jedburgh and who played at Melrose and served as a committee member.

The ladies of Melrose who raised the funds for the 'Ladies Cup' which, at the tournament, was to be presented to 'the best seven men'. Dave Sanderson, Ned's employer, accepted the trophy and it was never competed for again.

You can see it at The Greenyards, taking pride of place in a Sevens display cabinet within the Ned Haig Lounge.

Following Melrose's initiative, Sevens tournaments were started in many of the other Borders clubs and then the North East of England over the following decade.

The South of England did not really grasp the potential of the game until the inaugural Middlesex (Twickenham) Sevens in 1926. This tournament has, like many other sevens events, gone from strength to strength and regularly attracts top Gallagher Premiership clubs.

It is probably safe to assume Ned would never have imagined that his vision would help to introduce the game of rugby to a worldwide audience. Rugby is now played in countries such as Fiji and Kenya, who have enjoyed huge successes in the abbreviated form of the game.

The introduction of Hong Kong Sevens in 1976 has further revolutionised rugby sevens and introduced world stars like



Jonah Lomu and David Campese – who both used sevens as their route to full international honours. It has also provided a stage for sevens rugby geniuses like Waisale Serevi, DJ Forbes and Cecil Afrika to mesmerise opponents and amaze supporters who saw them in action.

The venue has produced an incredible atmosphere that can only be created when top international athletes and an enthusiastic crowd are brought together. It has become a three-day party for both rugby enthusiasts and fun seekers – whether they have a ticket or not.

The inaugural World Cup Sevens Tournament was held at BT Murrayfield in April 1993. Before it began, Melrose RFC



Local hero:
Scott Wight
in action for
Melrose

were approached by the world governing body, the International Rugby Board (now World Rugby) to ensure the club would agree to the trophy being named the Melrose Cup.

Significantly, the Scottish Rugby Union was aware of the quality of tournament delivered by Melrose RFC and as a result, officials from the club were asked to advise and assist in the planning and delivery of the first IRB Tournament.

The popularity of sevens has continued to grow, and its appeal is arguably more widespread than even the 15-a-side version of the game. As a result of the success of the aforementioned events, the IRB launched the World Sevens Series 20 years ago.

This series has now become a true development ground for emerging talent. It has also provided a regular high standard of competition throughout the year and seen some of the world's top stars.

All across the world, celebrations of rugby are held with hundreds of thousands of fans packing out venues from Hamilton, New Zealand to Dubai,

Hong Kong and Twickenham to celebrate the best in the world at rugby sevens.

Edinburgh and Glasgow were, for a short while, among those venues, with the prize at that leg of lifting the Ned Haig Trophy.

Melrose RFC is very proud that the club and Ned Haig have such a prominent place in rugby history and believe they have a responsibility to continue promoting the abbreviated game to the best of their ability.

In 1983, the Centenary celebrations saw a crowd of 17,500 witness a 24-team tournament where the French Barbarians, led by Les Bleus legend Serge Blanco, lift the new Centenary trophy as they beat a Stewart's Melville team led by Scotland and Lions captain Findlay Calder, in the final.

Melrose Sevens, always held on the second Saturday in April, celebrated the 12th anniversary of Seven-a-Side rugby on that same Saturday in 2008.

Rugby Sevens is now both a Commonwealth Games and Olympic Sport and is testament to the founders who set the original ball in motion.

ESMS PROUD OF STRONG LINKS WITH MELROSE

- Winners of the U16 Scottish Schools' Rugby Shield and Evolution Conference in 2018
- Winners of the U18 Schools' Cup four times and finalists on six occasions
- Each week more than 450 boys represent the school in 28 rugby teams from Primary 5 to Sixth Form
- 10 pupils and recent FPs in Scotland Rugby teams from U16 – U20 level
- Skill acquisition clubs
- Age appropriate strength and conditioning programmes





He is one of Melrose's greatest rugby sons, but Doddie Weir's playing career began during his time at Stewart's Melville College (SMC). The connection between ESMS runs far deeper than their roles in developing one of Scotland's greatest forward talents, though.

The school has sponsored the Junior Coaching Clinic at Melrose Sevens for many years, and will do so again in 2019. The Rugby Coordinator at ESMS, Bruce Ruthven, is a former captain at Melrose and is currently the Specialist Skills Coach for their Senior Club so the links between Melrose and SMC are very strong.

Stewart's Melville College teams and the SMC FP Club youth section also enjoy annual fixtures with Melrose, where coaches and players always look forward to visiting each other.

At Melrose, the coaching clinics will be run by former Edinburgh, Borders and Scotland 7s Head Coach Rob Moffat.

Young, enthusiastic players from across the country receive coaching for 90 minutes, with the aim of challenging their skills as well as exposing them to the 7s brand of the game.

As well as helping develop the talent of tomorrow through the coaching clinics, the school is also keen to continue to further their playing teams, from which a host of top Scotland stars have come through the ranks over the years.

The school regularly fields up to thirty teams each Saturday morning, a number that they are extremely proud of.

SMC believe that a mixture of hard work and collaboration between pupils, parents, coaches and teachers is fundamental to their success as they continue to maintain and develop their standard of rugby provision.

Every rugby player's development is equally important to staff. Using specialist coaching, video analysis, strength and conditioning training and skills workshops, coaching staff have created an exciting and varied programme where pupils are challenged to improve and to develop a resilient approach to their individual progress.

The school are, of course, very proud of Doddie, as he continues to spread the ESMS story as he battles Motor Neurone Disease. He is a great ambassador for the school, Melrose RFC and the sport in general.

Stewart's Melville College is a single-sex senior school in Edinburgh but, as part of the Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools family, it is closely twinned with The Mary Erskine School for girls through a shared House system and co-education for many activities; including trips, shows, concerts, orchestras, bands and societies, while Sixth Form is fully co-educational. Their range of extra-curricular opportunities is unrivalled, with 117 clubs, 75 sports teams and 52 music and drama events on offer each year.

For any boys who live further away from School, there are daily coach services across Edinburgh, the Lothians, and Fife. Full-time, weekly and flexi-boarding is also available, providing a comfortable, close-knit and happy home from home for boys and girls from Primary Six to Sixth Form.

For more information: admissions@esms.org.uk or www.esms.org.uk





DODDIE DELIGHTED WITH SUCCESS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Doddie Weir has done it all in the game of rugby – from representing his country to touring with the British and Irish Lions – and all of that, and all of George Wilson Weir's life away from the rugby pitch is documented in his autobiography, *My Name's Doddie*.

Released by Edinburgh-based Black and White Publishing last year, the book recounts stories of Doddie's home life, his playing career with Melrose and turning professional at Newcastle Falcons, as well as sharing details of his diagnosis of Motor Neurone Disease (MND) in December 2016.

Doddie said: "Stewart [Weir, author] and I had talked about doing a book for years but there was never any conclusion to the book. The MND diagnosis changed that and we decided to do it.

"I was doing a dinner in Coventry and Stewart came with me, we chatted the whole way there and back and got the first six or

seven thousand words done. I thought that was it, done and dusted, but little did I know we'd need another 10 or 12 times that again."

Stewart and Doddie, friends for many years, then set about putting together the remainder of the book which, as Doddie explained, brought up a mixture of emotions.

"There was some good times catching up with friends and former team-mates – Martin Johnson, Scott Quinnell, Richie Gray - the Gala one – and there's one story, I always blamed Gary [Armstrong] for missing a tackle on Joost van der Westhuizen playing for Scotland against South Africa, but 25-odd years later, it was only through Stewart's research he found out that Gary didn't even play!

"There were some difficult times too, what with the MND diagnosis and the situation we're in just now, which is not so clever."

Doddie said that having a close friend such as Stewart put it all together helped the quality of the product, of which he is extremely proud.

He added: "We've known each other a long time and there's things he knows about me that I can't even remember.

"He's been involved in sports writing so long, he knows what readers are looking for and that really comes across in the way he's pulled it all together."

The former Scotland lock also thanked everyone who has read the book for their comments: "I'm absolutely delighted with it. Everyone who's read it said they have loved it which is very kind."

And despite his MND diagnosis two-and-a-half years ago, Doddie retains his positive outlook, insisting he is "living the dream", while adding: "the book is to really give people an idea to my life and how lucky I have been, with the family, rugby, everything really."

For more information:
www.blackandwhitepublishing.com



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Laings Pre-Owned Collection specialises in high-quality, authentic pre-owned timepieces from the world's top luxury watch brands. If you're looking to take your first steps into the world of Haute Horlogerie or hoping to add to your collection, their carefully curated selection has the finest brands and highly sought-after models to choose from.

Pre-Owned watches tell a story and are much more than just a device that tells the time. It is this mystery and intrigue that makes pre-owned timepieces such a joy to own and more and more people are buying into the appeal of owning a part of history. There's something that's just so special about being the next chapter in the story of a luxury timepiece.

The first steps on a pre-owned watches journey are often when it is brought in as a Trade-In. Laings allows you to trade-in your luxury timepiece against a new or pre-owned model from their extensive collection.

To ensure that the Pre-Owned Collection is of the highest standards there are certain things that are taken into account:

- Has the watch been well-maintained and is in good working order?
- Does the watch come complete with the original box and paperwork/guarantee?
- How old is the watch and is it a particularly special edition?
- Is it from one of our high-end, luxury watch brands?

The option in trade-in is one that watch-lovers are now really taking advantage of. Buying a luxury watch will always be a considered decision and a purchase that many think is one that they then have to stick with forevermore. However, circumstances and tastes change. Trading-up allows you the novelty of owning a selection of luxury watches as time goes by. You have more opportunity to experiment and you can enjoy wearing a watch that suits you at all the different stages of life.

After a trade-in the journey of the watch isn't quite over and each watch will go through strict checks to ensure its quality. Laings in-house Rolex-certified watchmaker has over 35 years' experience and personally checks each model before it's verified as genuine. In some cases if the watch is a particularly old, vintage piece Laings will send it back to the brand to be certified as authentic.

As well as making sure that it is an authentic timepiece the quality will also be checked and it has to be in good condition or better. Additionally, every watch is cleaned and has had the necessary maintenance or complete service. It's these stringent checks that ensure the timepieces within the Laings Pre-Owned Collection are of the best quality.

Trust is so important when you're buying

a pre-owned timepiece. Laings has a history dating back to 1840 when the family-run business supplied the Clydebuilt vessels with Glasgow-made crockery, silverware and precision instruments. They also were appointed by the Admiralty and the Clyde Port Authority as official clockmakers. With a history spanning 179 years Laings have built up a really solid reputation and their watch experts have a superb knowledge of the watch market and can guide you through their collection, with a trust that it's difficult to find elsewhere.

But why should you really think about buying a pre-owned timepiece?

One of the major reasons for buying pre-owned is the price. You'll more than likely make a substantial saving on the price of the same model, than if bought new. This means that the world of luxury watches is opened up at a really good price. This saving can be really tempting, especially if you consider a pre-owned timepiece as a safer investment, with a lower risk factor, than buying brand new. Plus if you do sell it on, you'll be unlikely to lose money.

Another pull to pre-owned is their exclusive nature. You might be lucky enough to spot a limited edition model, giving it even more value and making it a special treasure to own. Perhaps it's a model that's been discontinued and you'll get a second chance to own the watch of your dreams. The rarity of certain pre-owned pieces is a real incentive and it's your chance to own something truly elite. As the popularity of pre-owned has grown, so has the selection that's available. On one hand you may find a model that's as good as new, whilst on the other you could come across a rare vintage piece from many years ago. The options presented are constantly changing and with such a huge variety on offer it's an exciting world to be in.

The romance of a Pre-Owned timepiece is undeniable. These are really special items that have been built from hundreds of intricate pieces by skilled craftsman that have spent years honing this artistry. A luxury item does not necessarily translate as something which is new, to own an exquisitely built mechanical watch from a bygone era is a truly luxurious thing. This is something that is irreplaceable.

Start your own story with Laings Pre-Owned Collection.

For more information: www.laingsuk.com

Melrose Sevens means a great amount to a great number of people. From fans to former winners, world greats to youngsters from the Borders, the tournament conjures up different emotions and memories for everyone.

One man whom the event means more to than most is Douglas Hardie, the current President of the host club.

His first memory of Melrose Sevens stretches back to the 1960s, and Douglas also recounted tales of the likes of Serge Blanco, David Campese and Melrose's very own son, Doddie Weir, all turning out at The Greenyards on the second Saturday in April along their illustrious careers.

Douglas has been hard at work planning and preparing for this season's tournament, and is looking forward to another hugely successful day for the club, and the town.

He told *SCRUM*: "We're really looking forward to it. We've got as impressive a guest line-up as we've had for many years, so that's one aspect and the buzz always begins a while beforehand and gradually builds up to the event itself.

Douglas, who is nearing the end of his two-year term as Melrose RFC President, also explained what his role in organising the Sevens involves. He added: "As President I have an overriding involvement in everything but I have to admit I've got a really good team around who take care of their own areas of responsibility – everything from health and safety to the actual rugby side of it. That makes life an awful lot easier.

"Something that is maybe missed is the huge economic benefit to the whole area, not just Melrose. It brings a lot of money to the area and hopefully benefits businesses in the town especially."

Reflecting on his time at the helm: "It is a considerable privilege to be President of a club like Melrose. My official position prior to being President was Marketing and Sponsorship Convenor, so I've had a hands-on role with everything other than the rugby side."

Looking to the rugby side, Douglas is looking forward to seeing some more stars of tomorrow take to The Greenyards pitch. He continued: "Everybody from Serevi to Campese, Mark Ella have all turned out [at Melrose] so it's been superb to be able to look back at these players, and a number closer to home – the Hastings brothers both played here, Doddie's got a Sevens medal.

"It's a 'who's who' of the rugby world, never mind just sevens."

There are many factors surrounding the day that Douglas and the team behind the Melrose

DOUGLAS ON THE 'HONOUR' OF OVERSEEING MELROSE SEVENS



Sevens can control, but one thing they have no say over is mother nature. When asked if he'd begun looking at the weather forecast for 13 April, Douglas joked: "Hasn't anyone told you he's a Melrose man?" while adding:

"There's no accounting for it – we just have to keep our fingers crossed and hope that somebody in a higher position in ourselves looks on us kindly with a good day."



WEE FARM DISTILLERY CONTINUING TO GROW IN STRENGTH

Jenny McKerr was once known for feeding the back division during her days as Ayr Ladies' scrum-half, before a move to Lanarkshire saw her turn her hand to farming alongside husband Stephen. Now, they are turning their hand to producing their own gin at the Wee Farm Distillery.

Since deciding to embark upon their own gin adventure a year ago, the couple have launched Drover's Gin, which launched in May 2018. Unlike most other gins, Drover's was created as an accompaniment for steaks, as Jenny explained.

"We put things spices like peppercorn in it to make it pair with the steak. We kept it quite fresh and citrusy, so it's not a dry gin, it's just a really refreshing drink. That was the first gin we made, and then it just evolved from there to be honest."

She added that since the launch of

the gin nearly a year ago, the business has flourished. "We developed into gin liqueurs and started bartering local fruit for gin, which was quite a nice deal. We make a lot of rhubarb and raspberry and different gin liqueurs, we've got over 40 different flavours, we've generally got a new flavour every month too, so that keeps people interested.

"In November last year, we launched our Farmer Strength gin as well, which is our navy strength version, so it's 57%. This year we're about to launch artist edition of the Drover's, and we've teamed up with Jan Laird, so we're now going to have a personality to the Drover's Gin cow."

The partnership with Jan is something Jenny is really excited about. She continued: "I am really keen on Jan's artwork, I think she does a great job by giving cows personality. We asked her to

create a 'Drover's Gin Cow', that's what she did, we're just about to launch."

Jenny has been thrilled with the success of Drover's Gin so far, and gave an insight into the 'nano-production' which is all carried out on the farm, near Forth in South Lanarkshire.

She added: "The distillery is in the farm steading, it used to be where the farmer before us kept his bull, so it was a typical milking area with the stalls, it's just a year past in December, we decided let's get the needle gun out and spent three weeks needle gunning those. The distillery is a four metre by four metre building, it's a tiny byre, it used to house three cows, and that's what we've converted into the distillery."

Jenny hopes that Wee Farm Distillery continues to go from strength-to-strength.

LAWSON KEEN TO ENSURE ST ANDREWS KEEP LEARNING FROM SEVENS EXPERIENCE

One of the guest teams at Melrose Sevens this year are the University of St Andrews, and their Director of Rugby Scott Lawson believes the experience will benefit the players who are involved.

"It's brilliant. The lads got a taste of it a couple of years ago when they played an exhibition match before the final but to be invited into the main draw into what is ultimately the most prestigious 7s tournament in the whole world is a great experience for them," said Lawson, who took on the Director of Rugby role after retiring from his own professional career.

The 37-year-old former Newcastle Falcons, Gloucester, Sale Sharks and London Irish hooker is unsure of what his role will be on the day, admitting "I'm not really a student of the Sevens game", he hopes to impart the knowledge he gained during his career on the young St Andrews players.

He said: "Rugby is about experiences a lot of the time and St Andrews are very fortunate that they have the Varsity match at Murrayfield in front of 10,000 people and fortunate again to get to play in Melrose.

"I've been involved in some big games, World Cups, Six Nations, played in some great venues and been on some great tours. It's about enjoying yourself and soaking it all in but also making sure that you keep account of yourself when you play."

Having taken on his new role after retiring at the end of last season, Lawson said he's "thoroughly enjoyed" his first few months at St Andrews. He added: "The guys apply themselves fantastically well. I have thoroughly enjoyed living in St Andrews and embracing everything that the University has got to offer. Sport and the investment in sport that the University has is just huge.

"I am quite fortunate to be in the position where I have lots of close interaction with the lads on a daily basis but yes, at club level you wouldn't see each other as much as these guys do.

"These guys are either in class together, or living together in a flat. They're a really, really tight-knit group and from a coaching point of view, that's great. They can hold each other accountable and they're a strong bunch who want to do well together."

While Lawson's focus is on ensuring the team give a good account of themselves at Melrose, he is also looking forward to the University's own Sevens tournament at the end of April.

Of that event, he continued: "It's a great event, it's student-run and there's always a massive turn out from the wider St Andrews community.

"Also, what we're trying to do with rugby and sport in general is to make it an integral part of student life. The facilities we have, the accommodation, the gym, the pitches, it's good to have it all in a small, performance environment."

Lawson is also keen to bring a high-performance element to the University's rugby set-up, alongside a strong social element.

"I've tried to align the performance element with the social aspect of the club. Students love to get together and have a good time but that experience will be amplified if they first put in a good performance on the pitch. We're going to the competition to 100% focus on the Sevens.

"It's a great day out socially, there's no hiding away from that but in all levels of rugby from the lower leagues all the way up to international level you will enjoy your time off the pitch a whole lot more if you put in a good performance on it."







SHOOSMITHS IS A SAFE PAIR OF HANDS FOR BUSINESS

Like in rugby, taking the time to invest in the skills and dynamic of your team ensures challenges can be effectively solved and positive results achieved. It's an approach the team at a multi-award winning law firm Shoosmiths, embrace

Scotland's capital city is one of 12 UK-wide locations from which Shoosmiths offers its legal services. From Saltire Court in Edinburgh city centre, their talented corporate, real estate, debt recovery / insolvency, commercial litigation and employment legal teams are committed to consistently achieving exceptional results for clients.

Modern rugby requires quick-thinking, agile players who can clearly communicate and operate effectively as individuals and as a team. Indeed, teamwork across offices and innovative thinking is very much part of the company's culture to ensure clients consistently benefit from the very best legal advice.

Moreover, with profits in our UK-wide business up 22% to £128.5m (as of April 2018) and a growing blue-chip client base, the team at Shoosmiths believe corporate Scotland is receptive to their enlightened business practices.

Every client's needs differ and Shoosmiths in Edinburgh have the legal skills and sector insights to ensure our clients can effectively achieve the desired result. It may be a request to advise on a commercial or residential development deal, provide sound legal counsel to a landowner or telecoms operator, manage the legal process of a corporate acquisition or funding round for a SME, advise on a complex litigation case or even to provide expert guidance for a business on its rights and obligations within employment law.

Quite often, a particular project requires input from several of the company's law divisions. Fortunately, due to a firm belief and investment in inter-office communications, such advice is readily available. Whatever the requirement our existing and potential clients enjoy the reassurance that Shoosmiths has the knowledge, team and successful track record to help.

And of course, every team likes to win. Shoosmiths is very proud to be the recipient of notable coveted awards, including being crowned National/Regional Firm of the Year in the Legal Business Awards 2018. For the past three years, Shoosmiths' has won the Debt Recovery Team of the Year category at the Law

Awards of Scotland and were also recently appointed to the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Wider Public Sector Legal Services Panel.

Naturally, in a highly competitive legal marketplace, their ability to consistently and effectively support and advise clients depends on maintaining a robust recruitment and talent pipeline. In-house training, mentoring and flexible working practices are very much part of the office culture at Shoosmiths. Newly qualified or partner, at Shoosmiths there is a very real opportunity for progression at every stage of a lawyer's career.

To borrow another rugby analogy, off the field of play our legal firm is also keen to be a positive role model for our profession and within the communities we serve. Consequently, throughout the year Shoosmiths' employees undertake a wide-range of national fundraising initiatives for selected charities, including the Scottish Association of Mental Health (SAMH). Our employees also support initiatives within local communities and in Edinburgh this includes supporting rugby at club level.

For more information: www.shoosmiths.co.uk



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MELROSE SEVENS: A TIMELINE

This is a breakdown of what's happened at the Melrose Sevens since the turn of the century.

2000 -

The Millennium Sevens saw two Southern Hemisphere sides battle for the trophy, with Fijians Nawaka beating Christchurch of New Zealand 26-10 in a pulsating final.

2001

Nawaka failed at the last to defend their crown, slumping to a 38-19 loss to the star-studded Barbarians.

2002

Boroughmuir, with a young Mike Blair pulling the strings, defeated a Scottish Thistles side 38-7 to win their second crown, adding to successes in 1963 and 1976. Blair's nine tries, including two in the final, helped launch what has been an exceptional career for the former Scotland captain.

2003

A ridiculous final saw Sale Sharks beat Stellenbosch University 31-24 to become

the first professional side to reign at The Greenyards. The losers would go on to create their own Melrose history in the coming years.

2004

Stellenbosch lifted the first of two titles with an incredible 36-35 win over New Zealanders Ponsonby to delight a crowd with which they had built up an affinity the year previous.

2005

The South Africans became the first side to retain the Ladies Cup this century, although beating Melrose 38-24 did little to maintain local affection for them! Future Springbok star Gio Aplon burst onto the scene in a memorable final.

2006

Newcastle Falcons proved too strong for Heriot's as Andrew Skeen orchestrated

the English team's maiden Melrose success, with a certain Tim Visser catching the eye for the eventual champions.

2007

Falcons couldn't replicate their 2006 heroics as the University of the Orange Free State (Shimlas) nicked a 17-10 win to continue the South African love affair with the Ladies Cup.

2008

A Scottish side became champions for the first time in six years with a stunning 33-12 win over Leicester Tigers, with current internationalists Greig Laidlaw, Richie Vernon and Chris Fusaro defeating a Tigers side boasting Billy Twelvetrees, Tom and Ben Youngs.

2009

The hosts again narrowly missed out at the last, as the University of Johannesburg



Chris Dean captained Edinburgh to their 2016 win.



Famous faces: Chris Fusaro, Richie Vernon and Greig Laidlaw were winners in 2008.

became the third South African side to triumph in five years. Melrose went down 35-21 despite an early Scott Wight score.

2010

Hamilton, of South Africa as opposed to South Lanarkshire, defeated the defending champions 35-26 in another high-scoring final in front of a capacity crowd. An Army side made it to the last four, boasting Junior Bulumakau, who now plays for Glasgow Warriors.

2011

Melrose delighted their followers with a 12th title, rising to the occasion to beat an experienced Hamilton at a sun-drenched Greenyards. Callum Anderson and the irrepressible Scott Wight each scored twice to spark pandemonium and a week of sore heads in the Borders town!

2012

Saracens lifted their first Sevens under the auspices of Kelly Brown, seeping aside Jed-Forest in the final with Duncan Taylor and Ali Price in their ranks, as well as a number of youngsters who would go on

to play in the Gallagher Premiership.

2013

The English side retained their title with a tense 24-22 win over Clermont-Auvergne, Nils Mordt landing a dramatic conversion to cue celebrations. Scott Wight, the darling of 2011, helped Aberdeen Grammar beat Melrose in the last eight after his release from Glasgow.

2014

Scotland boasted another winner, albeit in the shape of the Glasgow Warriors, who thrilled with American speedster Carlin Isles and the mercurial Niko Matawalu. It was that man Scott Wight who again stole the headlines, scoring between the posts for the Warriors in the final against Edinburgh Accies to wrap up proceedings.

2015

Glasgow repeated the trick of Saracens and Stellenbosch by winning back-to-back tournaments, brushing aside a spirited Germany with the assistance of Gregor Young, who had impressed for Jedforest and received an injury summons to score a brace in the final. Murray McConnell

also grabbed two tries as Warriors gave Niko Matawalu a perfect send-off.

2016

Edinburgh followed suit on their first ever invite to Melrose, swotting aside all in their wake. The big story, however, was the brilliant run of Jed Forest, who almost upset their more illustrious opponents, pushing them all the way in the final, the Young twins at the forefront.

2017

English professionals Harlequins lit up The Greenyards and cantered to the title thanks in part to a wonderful afternoon from Charlie Walker, who had previously represented England 7s on the international stage

2018

Watsonians and Melrose ensured a Scottish club winner would emerge for the first time since 2011, the Edinburgh side claiming a narrow 19-14 victory to scupper hopes of a home win

A HONEYMOON DREAM COME TRUE



You may have seen tweed rugby balls featuring the colours of some of Scotland's most famous rugby clubs spring up recently. They are the work of Lazy Pheasant, the luxury home furnishings company launched by Alanna Dale in 2018.

The idea for the company goes back much further though, as Alanna herself explained. She said: "The idea for Lazy Pheasant was established in 2013 whilst on honeymoon in Corsica. I had a desire to create a business based on my passions for art, photography, sewing and the countryside but didn't know quite how to combine them. As we spoke about creating a business, I liked the idea of the pheasant and my husband Alastair said 'what about Lazy' and Lazy Pheasant was born.

"At the time I worked for a Mining company and after the honeymoon I got back into the normal working routine, although the business idea was always in the back of my mind. It wasn't until I was on Maternity Leave that I really started to develop the vision for what Lazy Pheasant would become – a luxury home furnishings company."

The company launched last year and, based in Ayr, the town's rugby club seemed an obvious place to start producing tweed rugby balls adorned with the club's pink and black colours, while ties to home also saw Alanna repeat the feat in red and black, for Stirling County.

"As a child I supported Stirling County and would watch the games in anticipation of getting autographs from the players – Ian Jardine, Kenny Logan, Kevin and Mark



McKenzie were the local heroes at the time.

"Stirling has strong rugby connections and at school we would be taken to Scotland games, which as a child was really exciting and awe inspiring. So there is definitely a deep rooted love for the game."

Alanna also explained how the idea for the tweed rugby balls – part of the company's Lazy Lineout range - initially came about. "My nephew currently plays for Ayr Rugby mini's, he's obsessed with rugby, and when I was asked to make tweed curtains for his room, I used the leftover material to make a rugby ball and this is how the tweed rugby balls started."

Lazy Pheasant will properly be taking flight in 2019, with a big year ahead for Alanna. The Lazy Pheasant range will be seen further afield throughout the UK in partnership with selected stockists. The Lazy Pheasant website will continue to be at the heart of the

business, selling the full range of luxury home furnishings.

Alanna added: "We are really excited about new products being launched in the run up to the Rugby World Cup – perfect to scrum down on the sofa with and watch the games! However the biggest development for the year ahead is going to be the supply of Lazy Pheasant products made in club colours for rugby clubs.

"The tweed rugby balls from the Lazy Lineout range look great in club colours. We are really excited about this development and look forward to working with clubs who want to offer something a bit different. We are always happy to deal with bespoke orders for our products and any enquiries can be made through our website."

For more information:
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Guest sides have always been one of the most exciting announcements when the Melrose 7s rolls around every year and although times have changed in terms of being able to attract true global superstars compared to yesteryear, the potential to unearth the next gem remains.

For instance, 2012 saw the visit of English giants Saracens, who were coached on the day by former Scotland captain and Melrose man Kelly Brown. If fans didn't know a great deal about a few of the Sarries squad before they went on to lift the title with a 50-21 win over Jed-Forest, they certainly did at the full-time whistle.

Future Scotland stars Duncan Taylor and Ali Price were both part of the victorious group, the pair having since gone on to amass 44 international caps between them and, injury willing, they'll both be a part of Scotland's 2019 World Cup adventure in Japan.

Saracens went on to defend their title in 2013 with a different line-up, although one that contained the now-capped Englishman Ben Spencer as well as exciting prospects like Nathan Earle and Nick Tompkins.

Glasgow Warriors then mirrored Sarries' efforts in winning both the 2014 and 2015 instalments of the world's oldest 7s event, thrilling crowds along the way with some scintillating sevens rugby. Looking back, it's perhaps the least we should have expected given Warriors could boast the mercurial talents of Niko Matawalu and, in 2014, American roadrunner Carlin Isles. Serenely supported by Scottish talents like Scott Wight, Mark Bennett and Fraser Brown, the Glasgow side impressed in particular during their first Ladies' Cup and just about got over the line a year later despite a valiant effort by Germany as the tournament celebrated its 125th staging.

In 2016, it was Edinburgh's turn to lift the prestigious Melrose trophy, putting in a professional series of displays and eventually seeing off Jed in the final despite the Borderers' very best efforts. In a squad containing homegrown talents Damien Hoyland, Nathan Fowles and Chris Dean, it was big Samoan star Sasa Tofilau who went over in the last knockings to seal Roddy Grant's men their first and only Ladies' Cup.

In 2017 it was an English side's turn to dominate, an inspired afternoon from Charlie Walker playing a major role in helping Harlequins beat the hosts in an entertaining final, despite trailblazing by two points at the break. James Lang, the versatile back who has since gone on to



GUEST SIDES SURE TO THRILL ONCE MORE AT MELROSE

Stuart MacLennan takes a look at the teams who will be making the slightly longer journeys to Melrose.

get international honours with Scotland, was part of the victorious Quins squad - another example of how this iconic event can inspire players, even in this day and age, to go on to great things.

Last year of course Watsonians broke the hearts of the Greenyards faithful by beating the hosts in an all-Scottish club affair, veteran sevens man Andrew Skeen pulling the strings and leading his side to a 19-14 final win.

And so to this year's Melrose Sevens, which once more boasts some very exciting guest teams, as well as the usual smattering of Scottish club talent, who will all be encouraged by the fact two of their own made it all the way to last year's showpiece game. Who will emerge from this year's tournament having broken onto the scene and made a name for themselves?

University of Edinburgh, St Andrews University and Durham University will provide lots of youthful exuberance and should not be written off given BUCS rugby has never been stronger, whilst the

presence of a British Army team could spring quite a few surprises given the vast amount of players they must have at their disposal.

Maties is a team not immediately known to most sevens fans, but they have a particular affinity with Melrose in that they are indeed the rugby club associated with South African institution Stellenbosch University. Stellenbosch have a rich history in this event, having first lifted the Ladies' Cup in 2003 and managing to defend their title a year later in one of the most entertaining finals ever witnessed at the Greenyards, courtesy of a 36-35 nail-biter over New Zealand side Ponsonby.

Winners in 1962 and again in 1965, London Scottish have a rich and colourful link with rugby north of the border, having launched the careers of numerous Scotland internationals and continuing to perform admirably in the second tier of English rugby to this day. They travel to Melrose with a squad that will no doubt contain at least a couple of natives and are sure to be one of the favourites to lift the Ladies' Cup.



Asked about the prestige surrounding an invite to Melrose, the club said: "London Scottish is incredibly excited to be returning to Melrose 7s this year after many years away from one of the greatest sevens tournaments in the world. London Scottish is both honoured and privileged to be returning and are hoping to put on a good show to the Melrose crowd in April. We will be bringing up a strong side to try and compete with the best teams on the day."

"It is fantastic for London Scottish to re-establish its link north of the border at a landmark Scottish rugby event. After a summer tour up to Edinburgh & Glasgow and now with the Melrose 7s, London Scottish are firmly placing themselves as an important component of Scottish club rugby."

Tiger Rugby are the final guest side at the 2019 Melrose Sevens, returning after losing narrowly to Edinburgh Accies last year. Representing North America and the brightest young talent it has to offer, they are also competing at the prestigious

Hong Kong 10s at the beginning of April and are equally excited to see if they can lift the world's oldest sevens trophy when visiting the Scottish Borders.

Founder Paul Holmes said: "It's an absolute honour to be invited back and not something we take for granted. To us being in Melrose is the same as being in The Heaven of Rugby. We love it and it is always incredibly special and always a one of a kind."

"We will have a international squad with a lot of experience and knowledge. We also will have our USA young players who are vying for future success and honour like Perry Baker had."

The seven guest teams at the 2019 Melrose Sevens not is not only apt as a number, but they will all provide stern tests for Scottish club sides vying to emulate the success of Watsonians last time around. One of the iconic dates in the Scottish rugby calendar is upon us once more.

LAZY PHEASANT

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CAIRNHILL PROUD OF GROWING RUGBY INVOLVEMENT

Coatbridge-based Cairnhill Structures is one of the principal partners of this year's Melrose Sevens, and with the company's name now adorning the main stand at The Greenyards, they are delighted to be involved.

"When we first discussed the opportunity of being a principal partner at the Melrose 7s we could not have dreamed this option would be available to us. To have Cairnhill on the front of the shirts and having our name on the iconic main stand on the day is very pleasing to see," said Group Managing Director Neil Watson.

He added: "Although our business has not been around as long as the main stand we pride ourselves on being collaborative in our approach to business, we can only hope to try and emulate this by nurturing our business relationships and helping them grow over our lifetime.

Cairnhill work throughout the whole of the UK offering a range of clients steel solutions to complex engineering and construction projects. Operating in difficult and quality conscious environments we use the most up-to-date production and factory controls possible to ensure the highest standards are met. The range

of specialist sectors they operate in are; Nuclear, Power Generation, Bridge Repair, New Build Bridges, Oil & Gas, Rail & Civil Infrastructure, Ministry Of Defence sites, light gauge SFS and Storage Tanks.

Cairnhill regularly appear in the Business Insider Top 300 SME list mapping considerable progress since they were established in 1980.

Neil explained that sponsorship of another club helped raise the profile of the business and led to the opportunity to forge a relationship with Melrose.

"Our sponsorship with London Scottish has certainly raised our business profile and as such we have been approached by various clubs and associations across lots of different sports to look at partnership opportunities. One of these opportunities was Melrose Rugby Club who were looking for partners to help to continue the good work that has already been done historically to make Melrose 7s a world class event in the rugby calendar.

"We were especially interested in supporting and developing younger players and this is close to the hearts of the Melrose Clubs ethos and values. Cairnhill will continue to do that wherever

possible and we really want kids to continue enjoying their sports and more importantly to keep having fun.

On top of their association with London Scottish and GHK in Glasgow, the company also supports Waysiders Drumpellier, and Neil added of that relationship: "We have arranged for some of their youth team to attend the Melrose Rugby Clinic on the morning of the 7s and then to attend The Greenyards to see the 7s in the afternoon. 7s is all about fun, hopefully the kids will enjoy it and it will inspire them to keep playing the game with a smile on their face."

He said all the staff at Cairnhill are "buzzing" to be involved with the prestigious Sevens this year: "It is not only steeped in history and tradition but over the generations it has seen some of the most remarkable rugby players of our time run out on the Greenyards pitch. I think what we may not be looking forward to is a Melrose v London Scottish final, if only a draw was possible then we would have the perfect ending for everyone here at Cairnhill."

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DODDIE'S MAD YEAR OF PLAID

Last year at Melrose Sevens the My Name Doddie'5 Foundation tartan was fairly new on the block, launched on 23 February just in time for the Calcutta Cup and when the fabulous new suit arrived Doddie Weir was in his own words "like a kid in a candy store".

A year on and the tartan ScotlandShop designed with him has taken on many different forms with TV cameras catching Tams and Scarves in stadiums around the world. While generous fans aid the fundraising efforts for MND and their favourite rugby legend we have been bowled over by the popularity of the tartan.

The bold yellow and black of the Melrose colours form the base of the Doddie'5 tartan so it was very apt that last year the ball boys and girls sported caps in this tartan as they sprinted around doing their job in the sunshine.

In July, some of the world's best golfers donned their plaid to celebrate Tartan Wednesday at the Scottish Open Pro-Am in Gullane. Leuchie House, near North Berwick, is Scotland's only dedicated respite centre and offers caring respite breaks to people with long term neurological conditions,

including Motor Neurone Disease. Leuchie House Ambassador and Scottish rugby legend Gavin Hastings – a former team mate of Doddie – was one of the Pro-Am participants decked out in tartan trews.

The tartan theme continued on the Home Nations Tandem ride from John O'Groats to Land's End in September, while Doddie kept up an international profile showing off his suit at the Hong Kong Sevens, and the Scotland Women's team were caught on camera modelling the tartan tams.

The tartan was turned into Headbands and hit the headlines in Rome before the Scotland vs Italy Six Nations game last year with the "March of 1000 Headbands" catching on with fans meeting to walk to the game together.

True to the amazing support the My Name'5 Doddie Foundation garners wherever it goes the follow-up event was a ten-fold "Gathering of 10,000 Headbands" march which took place from Edinburgh's Mercat Cross in November before the Autumn International against South Africa.

Doddie said: "Who could have predicted that strapping my enormous ears when I was a player would lead to events like this! It's

a bit of fun but also a great way to support the Foundation and get together with fellow fans."

Our very own Tartan Ted struck out from BT Murrayfield Stadium in the Autumn, visiting rugby clubs around the country and ending up at the Cardiff Arms Park for the inaugural Doddie'5 Cup match against Wales. He ended up in commentator Jill Douglas' bed so no more questions asked there!

Proving that personality is everything the Doddie'5 tartan has been the most fun to design and develop products for and it's fantastic success and the support of the big man is heart-warming. ScotlandShop look forward to creating more fabulous Doddie'5 tartan products made in Scotland and even more fundraising throughout 2019.

For more information:
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EXCITING TIMES AHEAD FOR GRAHAM + SIBBALD

Graham + Sibbald have extensive links to rugby clubs across Scotland, from Watsonians to Whitecraigs; Melrose to Marr and Kilmarnock to Dundee among a plethora of clubs across the country who benefit from sponsorship.

The business' rugby ties extend much further than that, as Keith Watters, Partner and former President at Watsonians, explained: "Having progressed through the ranks as ballboy, scoreboard operator and gate steward at Watsonians, I played for the club for over 10 years from leaving school and was recently President of the club for three years, the longest single term in the club's history. It was a great honour overseeing the club's promotion back to the Premiership."

And Keith was continuing a family tradition of turning out for the Myreside men: "My father Mark is the record holder of appearances for the 1st XV having played 348 games for the club," while among the staff are current Melrose scrum-half Murdo McAndrew, former Melrose man Joe Helps, and ex-Edinburgh Northern player Greg Cranston, of whom Keith said: "He claims to have been Edinburgh Northern's answer to John Eales! Greg must



be one of the few guys to come from Hawick who has never actually turned out for the Green Machine." The rugby connections at Graham + Sibbald are going from strength to strength, and the business - which celebrated its 60th anniversary this year - is doing likewise.

Keith, who has been with the company for 18 years, continued: "Graham + Sibbald were recently recognised for our dedication to the recruitment, support, development and retention of young staff members within the

Firm. As such, we received a Silver Investors in Young People accreditation for our efforts.

"The firm celebrated its sixtieth anniversary, with our first office opening in February 1959 in Dundee. At the time, it was the only solely valuation-based practice in the city. Now, with a total complement of 14 offices in Scotland, we are one of the largest and most respected property services firms.

"We have also moved South of the border, opening an office in Manchester to expand our network of Building Surveying staff across the country, which is extremely exciting. The opening of this office was of strategic importance to the firm as they continue to move in an onwards and upwards direction to satisfy their client's specific needs.

"Moving South of the border will allow the Building Surveying team to work closely on a number of dedicated projects."

And while Keith looks forward to a busy time for the business, he is also looking forward to the 2019 Kings of the Sevens season.

For more information on Graham + Sibbald:
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THE BARBADOS 7S GEARS UP FOR THIRD YEAR

The Barbados 7s takes place later this year on 13-14 December at the Kensington Oval, the country's largest cricket ground. SCRUM caught up with Referee's Manager and one of the main organisers of the event, Graham Allen.

The sport of rugby sevens has really thrived in recent years, with the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series going from strength to strength and with the sport having gained Olympic status for the first time in the 2016 Games.

The Barbados 7s is another example of the game which is proving increasingly popular, as the event prepares for its third year this December.

Having been held on school playing fields in its debut year in 2017, the tournament was moved to the Oval last year, creating a memorable experience for players and officials. Mitsubishi Electric agreed to be the main tournament sponsors last year, with Project Waterboys and Rugby Ecosse recording back to back title wins in the male and female competitions, respectively.

"John Inverdale came out as guest speaker for the charity dinner we held on the Thursday night, which raised \$15,000 for a local charity. There was a lot of interest from around the world via the live feed. I don't think people were expecting the standard of rugby to be anywhere near as good as it is," Graham added.

Last year the tournaments had entrants from countries including Scotland, Canada and America and with the standard ever increasing, tournament organisers hope to attract bigger names both in terms of players and officials.

Graham revealed that this year, they are looking to bring in renowned sevens referee Rasta Rasivhenge from South Africa and are in discussions with the Scottish Rugby about taking Mike Adamson and Sam Grove-White out to officiate and help raise the profile of the event.

As the tournament grows and with more

money available, another ambition for the team is to provide incentives for certain teams to get involved, by putting money towards travel and accommodation, in their goal to make the women's competition the "best in the world."

England 7s star Heather Fisher was part of Rugby Ecosse's team last year and Graham explained he was overwhelmed by her rugby talent.

"She would take it as a compliment, when I call her an animal! She is without doubt one of the best sevens player I have ever seen. I don't think I have ever been in awe of a rugby player before, she is just superb.

"The party atmosphere created by the fans during the weekend is exceptional, players commented that it's the noisiest crowd they'd ever played in front of and we're all really looking forward to the event coming again this year," he said.



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Past Champions:

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CATAPULT AIM TO OPTIMISE PERFORMANCE

Look closely when you next watch a Scotland game and you might just notice the outline of small devices protruding between the players' shoulder blades.

These are athlete monitoring devices that use GPS technology to measure the physical performance of athletes.

Providing in-depth data on everything from distance covered and top speed, to impacts and athlete loads, this technology is transforming the way Scotland train and prepare for the ever-increasing demands of international rugby.

The devices used by Scottish Rugby are built by Catapult, a sports technology company that provides performance solutions to more than 2100 teams worldwide including Australia, Scotland, Wales, Crusaders, Glasgow Warriors and Edinburgh Rugby to help optimise performance, reduce injury risk, and support return-to-play processes.

SPORTS SCIENCE FOR ALL

Despite initially being adopted by teams in the upper echelons of the game, Catapult's technology is no longer the preserve of rugby's elite. In recent years, Catapult's range of athlete monitoring solutions has evolved to bring wearable technology to youth teams, schools and academies.

Developed specifically for teams who want access to precise performance data

on a limited budget, Catapult's PLAYERTEK technology is able to simplify the analysis process by delivering key rugby metrics and actionable insights through a user-friendly software platform and mobile app.

Gordon Rennie, a sports scientist with Catapult and former strength and conditioning coach at Glasgow Warriors, believes that athlete monitoring technology gives amateur and semi-professional teams the ability to better understand and more effectively prepare for the physical demands of the sport.

"We don't only work with teams at the elite levels; we want to help teams and athletes at all levels to optimise their performance," says Rennie. "The key is to understand the demands of the game and what we want our athletes to do within that context. If you can do that, you can start to tailor your preparation to improve as a team and that's when I think you start getting the edge."

As well as helping teams to quantify and prepare for game demands, Rennie also believes that the technology can help amateur or semi-professional clubs to create a strong culture of accountability and support the players in understanding where they are in relation to their teammates and elite athletes.

"From a culture and accountability perspective around clubs, I think a lot of that comes with using the

technology," says Rennie. "I also think it gives players a framework and a benchmark to know where they are at."

"If they can look at the demands of the professional game, players in the amateur game can look at their data and compare it. They can see where they are at, and that may influence their thinking and they can try to improve and reach the next level in their careers."

LONG-TERM IMPACT

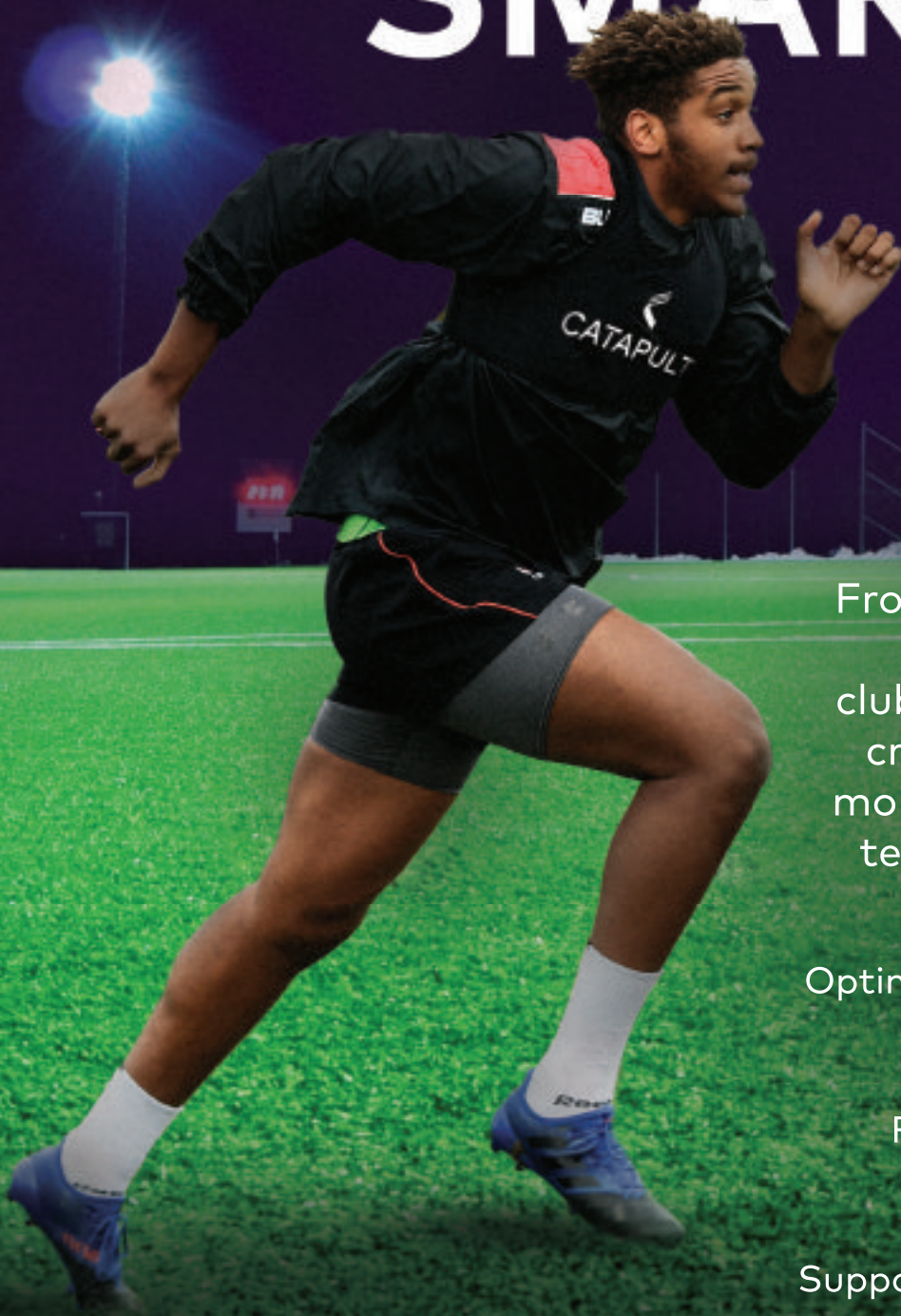
As more clubs in the amateur and semi-professional ranks implement athlete monitoring technologies, it will be fascinating to see what the impact of this improved performance infrastructure will be in the long-term.

By professionalising approaches to training and improving athletes' understanding of their own game, GPS monitoring tools are helping to develop a generation of rugby players who are comfortable with performance data and able to use cutting-edge technology to push themselves to the next level.

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A-Z OF THE MELROSE SEVENS

A IS FOR ATMOSPHERE. There's a great buzz around The Greenyards for the Sevens and it promises to be the same this year as fans come from all over Scotland - and beyond - to enjoy the day.

B IS FOR BORDERS SIDES. They form the backbone of the tournament and expect to see one or two derby matches as the likes of Gala, Melrose, Hawick and Kelso do battle.

C IS FOR CHAMPIONS. Stars of the Scottish and world game have been champions at Melrose - who will join them by lifting the trophy in 2019?

D IS FOR DODDIE. The big man is synonymous with Melrose, having played for the club during their league championship winning sides of the 1990s. Expect him - and his usually flamboyant tartan suits - to steal the show, off the pitch at least, once more this year.

E IS FOR EILDON HILLS. The triple-peak hills are located just

south of Melrose and provide a perfect backdrop to the Greenyards for one of the world's most iconic sporting views.

F IS FOR FANCY DRESS. It is a common theme at Melrose as teams and groups of mates look to outdo each other with the best outfits.

G IS FOR GREENYARDS. It is one of the most iconic grounds in rugby and for the Melrose Sevens a full house is guaranteed to grace The Greenyards.

H IS FOR HANDOFFS. There's few better ways to beat an opponent than with a big handoff, especially in sevens with space at a premium.

I IS FOR INVITED STARS. Edinburgh Rugby and Glasgow Warriors are both former winners of the Ladies Cup, while the likes of Saracens and Clermont Auvergne have also competed. This year, the guest teams are coming from as far afield as South Africa

J IS FOR JED-FOREST. The club from which Greig and Roy Laidlaw originate are four-time Melrose winners, but haven't lifted the trophy since 1974 - can they end their wait for a fifth Ladies Cup win this year?

K IS FOR KICKING. Frowned upon in sevens, any player who puts boot to ball, especially from a penalty, should expect some choice words from those around the ground.

L IS FOR LADIES CUP. That's the prize for the winners - some of the greats of world rugby have had their hands on the famous trophy - could we see another star of the future shine this year?

M IS FOR MELROSE, OF COURSE. The whole town shuts down for the Sevens and thousands of locals descend on The Greenyards to cheer on their team. Could 2019 see a home win?

N IS FOR NED HAIG. He is the man we owe it





MELROSE SEVENS



Top: Niko Matawalu scoring for Glasgow; bottom: Harlequins lifting the Ladies Cup in 2017

to - Ned was a butcher who invented rugby sevens.

O IS FOR OFFLOADS. A pass 'out the back door' can open up a defence and free up space. Expect a few players to try and emulate the feats of Edinburgh number eight Bill Mata.

P IS FOR PACE. One of the most crucial elements of a Sevens player is having a decent turn of pace. Some who are not so blessed may get exposed in the wide expanses.

Q IS FOR QUINS. Harlequins are two-time Melrose Sevens winners, most recently in 2017 when they beat the home side in the final.

R IS FOR RUNNING RUGBY. It's what sevens is all about really. Expect to see teams have a go from all over the pitch.



S IS FOR SEREVI. Arguably the greatest player to play sevens was Fijian Waisale Serevi (pictured below), and the great man graced Melrose with an appearance as he bowed out from the game at the top level. It'll be 10 years ago this year since he turned out for Leeds Metropolitan University as they were beaten by Ayr in the first round.

T IS FOR TIGERS RUGBY.

One of the guest teams this year - from South Africa. They'll bring a mix of pace and power to Melrose.

U IS FOR UNIVERSITY TEAMS. Both St Andrews University and the University of Edinburgh have been invited to take part at Melrose this year.

V IS FOR VICTORIOUS. Some of the greats of the game - from Doddie to

Gregor Townsend and Chris Paterson, they've all got winners medals from the famous event.

W IS FOR WEATHER. While the Sevens takes place in April, there is no accounting for what the Scottish weather may throw up. It has been known that fans have encountered all four seasons in the one afternoon.

X IS FOR X-FACTOR: From Serevi to Chris Paterson; Niko Matawalu to Carlin Isles, Melrose has seen some of the world's most exciting talents. Keep an eye for more stars of the future appearing at this year's tournament.

Y IS FOR YELLOW CARDS. Players shown a yellow card will spend two minutes, not 10, in the sin-bin

Z IS FOR ZERO. Not too many teams will be 'nilled' at Melrose Sevens with free-flowing rugby, and plenty of points expected.



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RAGING BULL DELIGHTED TO BE SUPPORTING DODDIE

Raging Bull has a wide-ranging involvement at all levels of rugby, and that will be showcased at the Aberdeen Standard Investments Melrose Sevens on 13 April.

The referees at this year's Melrose Sevens will all be turned out in Raging Bull-designed kit on 13 April, and Nigel Beaty, Sales Manager for Scotland, explained how that all came about. "Graeme Hastie asked us to look at a design for Border Referees Society with all Kings of the 7s clubs logos on the shirt. It is great they are supporting My Name's Doddie Foundation too."

Raging Bull are also involved with the My Name's Doddie Foundation and are the official kit suppliers.

Nigel added: "It is great to be involved - like many people, I've had contact through rugby in the past and he is an inspiration - you can see that by the warmth and affection that everyone has for him." The kit produced by Raging Bull for the My Name's Doddie Foundation has raised £25,000 to date, and Nigel added: "The Foundation are very pleased, they have not had one issue with delivery or quality. "We also working with the Foundation on

some new products including Rio Midlayer ¼ zip and rugby socks."

He hopes that Raging Bull will be in attendance at this year's Melrose Sevens, while all their stock - including rugby kits up to size 6XL - is available to buy online at www.ragingbullsportswear.com/my-name5-doddie-foundation

The Raging Bull range for the My Name's Doddie Foundation includes:

Rugby shirt - made from match quality polyester material. Classic fit with traditional collar.

Hoodie - comfy traditional poly cotton material with Doddie tartan panels.

Vest - polyester athletic vest great for the gym or your sponsored run, designed with space to fit your race number.

T Shirt - Cotton T shirt with Doddie logos including appliqué tartan number 5 on chest.

There are also plans in the pipeline to produce commemorative kit for the Heineken Champions Cup and European Rugby Challenge Cup finals, to be played in Newcastle in May.

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Mark Roberston, who won a Silver Olympic medal in Rio by representing Team GB 7s in the Olympic final, is a Dual Career graduate from Edinburgh Napier University. Mark is now a Strength and Conditioning Coach for the Fosroc Scottish Rugby Academy.

FEEDING THE TALENT PIPELINE

Scotland can look forward to the World Cup with a strong conviction that we have the capability to perform at the highest levels of the game.

The launch of the Super 6, immediately after the World Cup, will be a direct support for that vision. The new semi-professional top tier competition will create a bridge between the club game and Edinburgh and Glasgow Warriors at the professional level – feeding through a stronger pool of talent for Scotland's national selectors to consider.

Supporting the development of both the men's and women's games generally – including the Super 6 clubs – are the four Scottish Rugby Academies, which have been developing players aged 14-19 for some years now. Each provides personalised training and development to young athletes.

The Fosroc Rugby Academy in Edinburgh is based at Edinburgh Napier University, and the academics and staff at Sighthill campus work with players and coaches at all levels of the game.

"Edinburgh Napier University supports higher performance levels among aspiring players and coaches," said Dr Susan Brown, Edinburgh Napier's Lead for Partnerships and Enterprise, Sport, Exercise & Health Sciences. "With some of the best facilities and staff in the country, we are well placed to also add significant value to the Super 6 proposition."

The University's high-performance strength

and conditioning facilities have actually been supporting the pool of emerging talent since the Fosroc Academy opened in 2016. The product of £3.6m investment, it includes one of the UK's leading biomechanic labs, an exercise physiology lab and features an environment chamber that simulates altitude, humidity, and hot and cold conditions.

"The Academy has proven its value in producing a consistent flow of high quality players," added Susan. "It also supports an increased participation in sport for the wider community."

"Our ethos is that everybody can be an athlete – they're not just the ones on the podium," adds Susan. But for those aspiring to compete at the highest levels, the challenges remain considerable. The Centre for Developing Athletes at Edinburgh Napier supports talented students both on and off the field. The University has developed its academic work within rugby through the Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Performance Enhancement in Rugby Coaching, established in partnership with Scottish Rugby. "Our first cohort graduated in 2017 with a UKCC level 4 qualification, as well as a PG Diploma in Sports Performance Enhancement which is accredited by Sports Coach UK," added Susan.

Dual Career path delivers

"We know the challenge in balancing both studies and a sporting career, either

as an athlete or coach," added Susan, "and our students' successes demonstrate that our Dual Career focus is delivering results for top players who are combining their athletic career with study."

"I believe our Dual Career policy for athletes and coaches is the most flexible in the country, and was written on the basis that we want these student athletes to maximise their potential in their sport and their academic studies: one should not negatively impact on the other."

The impact is clear: the University has athletes from rugby, curling, athletics, tennis, ice hockey, mountain biking and kayaking, among others. "In rugby alone, our students include Simon Berghan, Grant Gilchrist, Damien Hoyland, Blair Kinghorn and Ben Toolis, all from the Scottish 2019 Six Nations Championship squad, as well as Jamie Farndale and Robbie Ferguson, the co-captains of the Challenge Trophy holders from the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series, played in Las Vegas in March."

"We created the BA Business and Enterprise in Sport specifically for elite athletes, or coaching staff who work within the elite sport environment. It's part-time, flexible, and includes distance learning. So no matter where in the world players are training or competing – Scotland, Japan or Las Vegas – our students can study whilst remaining focused on the future success of their sport."

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WE CONVERT POTENTIAL

We know the challenge in balancing both studies and a sporting career, either as an athlete or coach. Our students' successes demonstrate that our Dual Career focus delivers results. In addition, our **BA Business and Enterprise in Sport** is specifically designed for athletes or coaching staff in the elite sport environment.

Our facilities provide players with access to one of the UK's leading Biomechanics Labs, a Human Performance Lab and a Physiology Lab that simulates altitude, humidity and hot and cold conditions.

EDINBURGH CITY 7S IS BACK AGAIN IN 2019





The story behind the competition

Edinburgh City 7s was founded in 2017 by Donald Crawford after he had spent years wondering why Edinburgh didn't have its own regular premier 7s tournament.

"I came up with the idea in July 2017 but I had been thinking that a 7s tournament would go down well in Edinburgh for a few years," Donald told *SCRUM*.

"The Borders has the Kings of the 7s but there isn't anything like that in the capital. Edinburgh is a rugby-loving city and Inverleith Park is an ideal location for people to pop in to watch some excellent 7s so I thought it was screaming out for something similar."

And so, last year, Donald's plans came to fruition as Edinburgh City 7s was born. Twenty-six teams assembled at Inverleith Park to compete across three different competitions in a bid to take home the first Edinburgh City 7s titles and their accompanying silverware, and at the end of the day, South Rugby, School of Hard Knocks', and the 'Rex Club Red Kites Ladies came out on top, taking home the spoils in the Men's Elite, Men's Social and Ladies competitions, respectively.

Edinburgh City 7s in 2019

Edinburgh's premier rugby 7s tournament returns to Inverleith Park on 8 June and, looking ahead to this year's competition, Donald said: "Edinburgh City 7s 2019 is shaping up to be massive with team entries are already up on last year, and the quality of teams on our list is mouth-watering."

"With an estimated 52 teams, the tournament is set to double, and the Pilgrim's Gin Elite Cup welcomes the world's most prestigious invitational 7s side Samurai Rugby. The CLIC Sargent Godfathers are making the trip up from down south too."

This year's social competition is also at capacity with 16 teams ready to fight it out for the title while a VETs 10s tournament, open to those rugby enthusiasts over the age of 35, features for the first time.

Something for the fans

But for those whose playing days are behind them, Edinburgh City 7s also offers a wonderful spectator experience.

Indeed, Donald explained that there will be something for everyone at this year's event. "A street-food village will once again be on-site, ready to refuel even the hungriest spectator," he said, adding: "Our fully-stocked and licenced bars, including our beer tent, cider and gin gardens, sell a wide range of refreshments to the sound of live music from some of Scotland's best up-and-coming bands and DJs."

Donald and his team have worked hard to make the day a family-friendly experience too, creating a 'Family Zone' where parents and children to enjoy themselves in the comfort of a grandstand while watching the day's rugby on a big screen.

Edinburgh City 7s is certainly a welcome addition to the Scottish rugby calendar, and with time running out until the big day, get yourself a ticket if you don't want to miss out on 'Edinburgh's biggest party!'





CONTRASTING FORTUNES FOR PRO TEAMS IN LEAGUE AND CUP

While Glasgow Warriors remain on course for the Guinness PRO14 play-offs once more this season, things have taken a turn for the worse for Edinburgh, whose participation is now hanging by a thread. All that despite the capital club having won both of the 1872 Cup derbies over Christmas.

Glasgow sit atop Conference A with 61 points, three clear of nearest challengers Munster, while Edinburgh are seven points off third-place Ulster in Conference B, and three points off Scarlets in the coveted fourth place, a spot that would guarantee Champions Cup rugby once more next season.

Glasgow endured a difficult start to the year, with back-to-back defeats to Edinburgh followed by a disappointing loss at the hands of Benetton Rugby in Italy.

Things picked up thanks to a 9-3 win over Ospreys at Scotstoun, while victories over Cardiff Blues, Connacht and Zebre have restored Dave Rennie's men in pole

position in Conference A, despite a whole host of Scotland internationalists missing.

Ruaridh Jackson celebrated his 150th game for the club with a try in the 42-10 rout of Zebre in Parma, while new man Kyle Steyn has made an instant impact in his short time with the club. Steyn's form led to a call-up to the Scotland squad for the finale of the Guinness Six Nations.

Glasgow's upturn in form was also helped by the return to fitness of Matt and Zander Fagerson, George Turner and George Horne.

Edinburgh, meanwhile, have struggled in the league since recording two wins over their rivals from along the M8. Inconsistency has been something Richard Cockerill has tried his best to stamp out, but defeats to Southern Kings, Cardiff Blues their first defeat at BT Murrayfield in all competitions this season - and Benetton have somewhat derailed Edinburgh's march to the play-offs since then.

The capital club have recorded victories over the Southern Kings and Dragons,

without which their play-off ambitions would already be over, and face a difficult run-in to the season's end as Leinster and Ulster have to visit Edinburgh; while Cockerill's men will also travel to former champions Scarlets and end the season against Glasgow.

In between times, both sides have Heineken Champions Cup quarter-finals to contend with - Edinburgh welcome Munster to BT Murrayfield while Glasgow visit Saracens once more. Both sides could be set to make that trip minus some currently injured Scotland stars, with influential fullback Blair Kinghorn on the treatment table for Edinburgh and Glasgow missing an array of first-team regulars including Stuart Hogg, Tommy Seymour, Huw Jones and Ryan Wilson.

A tall order for Edinburgh in the league, but on the European front, it looks like Glasgow have their work cut out for them as both professional clubs aim to keep fighting on both fronts deep into the business end of the season.

PRO TEAMS SNAP UP TOP TALENT TO NEW DEALS

Both Edinburgh Rugby and Glasgow Warriors have been busy tying some of their top talent to new contracts, while also building their squads for next season.

Edinburgh have re-signed a pair of hookers, with recent Scotland squad member Dave Cherry signing a new deal with the capital club, while Cammy Fenton has also agreed an extension.

Cherry has put pen to paper on a one-year deal, having made 16 appearances for Edinburgh so far this campaign.

Fenton has also agreed a one-year extension to his deal, with both hookers committed to the capital club until the end of the 2019/20 season.

The club's outstanding business was the re-signing of Fijian number eight Bill Mata, who also signed a new one-year extension but is tied to Edinburgh until 2021.

Head Coach Richard Cockerill said: "Vili [Mata] is one of the most exciting talents in the world right now, so I'm delighted that he feels his future is here in Edinburgh."

Mata added: "I've had a great time in Edinburgh over the last two seasons. We've settled in well and my family loves it here."



"We're excited and blessed to be staying in this city for another two seasons."

Also joining the club on a short-term deal from the start of next season is former Kirkcaldy, Aberdeen Grammar and Heriot's lock Murray Douglas.

The 29-year-old will join from Super Rugby franchise Brumbies as cover for during the Rugby World Cup.

At the other end of the M8, Brandon Thomson has re-signed a new two-year contract with Glasgow Warriors.

The 23-year-old has played 18 times for the club since he joined in the 2016/17 season, scoring 81 points.

"I love the style of rugby that



Glasgow play and the atmosphere at Scotstoun is amazing," Thomson said.

Glasgow have also signed Kyle Steyn from Scotland 7s on a one-year deal from next season, although the 25-year-old has already made three appearances for Dave Rennie's side and been catapulted into the Scotland squad for the Guinness Six Nations.

"I'm stoked for the opportunity," Steyn said. "Glasgow are a massive club and play some great rugby, so I couldn't be happier."

Rennie was delighted to have signed the South African-born back. "Kyle has come in and trained with us a couple of times before and we've been really impressed with him."



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GAME 1: MONTPELLIER (A)

When Richard Cockerill's side were drawn in a group featuring three-time former champions Toulon, a star-studded Montpellier side coached by former Scotland boss Vern Cotter and Newcastle Falcons team who exceeded all expectations in the English Premiership last term, many wrote off Edinburgh's chances.

And it seemed to be going that way for the first half-hour against Cotter's men at the Stade Altrad, with Montpellier getting on top early. Edinburgh's revival in that match was, with hindsight, somewhat symptomatic of their performances in the pool as a whole – they just got better and better, and perhaps should have won in round one, but were beaten 21-15 by Cotter's side.

MONTPELLIER 21 EDINBURGH 15

MONTPELLIER SCORERS

TRIES: IMMELMAN, FALL, NGANDEBE

CONS: PIENAAR (3)

PENS: HICKEY

EDINBURGH SCORERS

TRIES: MCINALLY, FIFE,

CONS: HICKEY

PENS: HICKEY



GAME 2: TOULON (H)

In round two came another huge test as Toulon – the team Cockerill left as Head Coach of having taken them to a Top14 final to take the Edinburgh job – rolled in to BT Murrayfield. There were household names galore in the Toulon side, but they were steamrollered by a seemingly unstoppable Edinburgh juggernaut as they recorded a bonus-point 40-14 thumping of the French side.

EDINBURGH 40 TOULON 14

EDINBURGH SCORERS

TRIES: TOOLIS, PYRGOS, MCINALLY, DEAN

CONS: VAN DER WALT (3), HICKEY

PENS: VAN DER WALT (4)

TOULON SCORERS

TRIES: TAOIFENUA, IKPEFAN

CONS: BELLEAU, TRINH-DUC





GILCHRIST AIMING TO DO EDINBURGH PROUD IN CHAMPIONS CUP QUARTER-FINAL

He was one of the youngsters when Edinburgh Rugby last flirted with the knockout stages of European Rugby's premier club competition, and seven seasons after downing the might of four-time champions Toulouse to become the first-ever Scottish side to make a Heineken Cup [as it was then] semi-final, Grant Gilchrist is determined to do the capital city proud when Edinburgh host Munster on 30 March.

The Scotland lock believes the Heineken Champions Cup quarter-final clash with the twice former winners will be a "huge day" for the club and hopes the 23-man squad selected by Head Coach Richard Cockerill rise to the occasion.

"There's a real expectancy that comes with putting on the jersey regardless of who we're playing. We're at home, we're not going to put pressure on ourselves but we're going to put our best performance out there. It's going to be really exciting.

"Regardless of the result, it's more important that we perform well and put our best foot forward to progress.

"We don't look too far outside our

own group." The big lock also reflected on the 2012 run to the last eight that saw Edinburgh defeat, amongst others, star-studded Racing Metro [as they were then known], and the differences between that campaign and the current run.

"It was a traditional cup run – we weren't doing that well in the league but we had a good run in the cup. It almost felt like it was a different team when we played in the Heineken Cup that year.

The difference now is we're a lot more consistent. Back then we could get up for those one-off big games, you look at us under Cockerill and we've been building towards these big days. It's not been flash in the pan and now we're at the stage where we deserve to be having a big day like this."

Gilchrist has been encouraged by ticket sales so far, with more than 20,000 having already been sold for the big match. The Alloa-born lock believes this can spur the home side on: "We've already seen how well ticket sales are going, the fans are really excited about it and the playing group are as well. It's been a long time since the club has

had a day like this that we can look forward to.

"As someone who's been at the club for a long time, that day [2012 quarter-final vs Toulouse] stands out probably above the rest as home games I've been involved in. It was such a special atmosphere to play in front of 37,000 for a club game is not something that you do every week and the whole day was amazing.

"If we can better that [attendance] this time it's going to be amazing for the whole group, especially the boys who've not experienced that before as an Edinburgh player.

"It's a great opportunity for us to grow the club as well – the opportunity for a lot of extra people to watch and hopefully we can get them to come and follow us regularly as we move forward."

Looking ahead to the match itself, the 28-year-old picked out Munster's Ireland and British & Irish Lions captain Peter O'Mahony as one of their chief threats, especially at the line-out.

He also agreed with Head Coach Cockerill's assessment that winning the Heineken Champions Cup is probably



outwith Edinburgh's reach this year but added: "There's a lot of quality teams we'd need to beat. It's probably ahead of where we are in our development."

"We'll take it one game at a time but if we do get through, it only gets more exciting," with the winners of a last eight tie between Saracens and Glasgow Warriors waiting in the semi-finals.

For now, though, the 33-times capped Scotland internationalist is focused on putting all their efforts in to beating the Irishmen and creating another day to remember for the capital club at BT Murrayfield.



EDINBURGH RUGBY

FAN-ZONE BLOG

FAN-ZONE BLOG

@TheEmbraExpress



CAN EDINBURGH MASTER MUNSTER?

The arguably slightly late tackle by Peter O'Mahony on Stuart Hogg in the Scotland v Ireland match during the Guinness Six Nations was an interesting vignette that brought to mind what Edinburgh will face at the same venue on 30 March in the Heineken Champions' Cup quarter final.

While Scotland in the form of Ryan Wilson, gave as good as they got in the niggly department, Ireland were once again just that bit more streetwise than their hosts. That 'been there, done that' experience enabled them to take their chances when they came and force Scottish errors when under pressure.

Last season, when the Gunners visited Thomond Park in one of the PRO14 wild card playoff matches, it was that same mental edge that saw the Munstermen home. It took until the very final minutes until one felt that the Embramen really believed that they could win. By that time, it was too late and the match ended with the men in red nicking Embra attacking lineout ball.

They had been second best for much of the match, but the nous they have developed over many years of play-off rugby served them well and they dogged out the win.

This will be Edinburgh's third appearance in the Champions' Cup knock out stages. Both previous quarter finals were against Toulouse and they have a creditable 50% record. The travelling support at BT Murrayfield will be significantly bigger than last time. You'd expect that the 37,000 crowd that day might well be bested and the atmosphere will be electric.

Whatever the result, playing knockout rugby in front of a big crowd will be a new experience for many in the Gunners' squad and one that they will learn a great deal from.

I'm optimistic about this one. Particularly if they are at or near full strength in the tight five, the Gunners will not only be able to live with Munster up front, I think they have the capability to dominate.

If they can do that, they will both set the platform for

"I'm optimistic about this one. Particularly if they are at or near full strength in the tight five, I think they have the capability to dominate. "

their own attack, giving their back three a stage on which to show a wider audience what they can do, and will also eliminate much of the Irish province's threat.

Munster are not without dangermen in the back division, from Joey Carbery, flourishing as the undisputed number one playmaker, to veteran utility back Keith Earls, who just seems to have the knack of making things happen at crucial times. But stop their forward rumble and starve them of quality ball and they are beatable.

After enduring key injuries earlier this season, the Embramen are likely to see a number of experienced players back in harness in good time for this match, from John Barclay, 'Ray' Bradbury and Hamish Watson up front to Matt Scott and perhaps also

Mark Bennett in the backs.

In what is likely to be a tight match, Edinburgh will stick to the highly structured game plan that has served them well in the big matches so far this season. They will look to smash the Munster front row in the set piece, use the box kick frequently, and look to counter when opportunities present themselves.

As Munster will probably adopt a similar approach, this match is going to be all blood and thunder rather than Total Rugby.

I can't wait.



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VERNON PREPARING TO HANG UP HIS BOOTS

Former Scotland internationalist Richie Vernon is preparing to hang up his boots at the end of the season and move into the world of business

The 31-year old, who has enjoyed a 13-year professional career representing clubs both north and south of the border, is now looking forward to developing his career in the finance industry, having worked for Aberdeen Standard Investments alongside playing for London Scottish this season.

Vernon, who made an unconventional switch from the back-row to centre during his lengthy career won 24 caps for Scotland, the last of which came in the agonising 2015 Rugby World Cup quarter-final defeat to Australia. Vernon won 20 caps in the forwards before earning another four as a back following a mid-career positional switch.

He began his professional career with Border Reivers during the 2006/07 season, but following their disbandment at the end of that campaign, his contract was moved to Glasgow Warriors, where he would make 48 appearances before making a move south to join Sale Sharks in 2011.

He made 48 appearances for Sale, too, scoring 10 tries, but re-joined Glasgow in 2013, and went on to become a big part of Gregor Townsend's Warriors squad who went on to win the 2014/2015 Guinness Pro12 title, starting the 31-13 final win over Munster

After having a torrid time through injury, which included a 14-month lay-off with a shoulder problem and a further 10 months out after requiring Achilles surgery, Vernon left Glasgow and joined London Scottish last June.

He represented Scotland at two World Cups, 2011 in New Zealand at the most recent 2015 in England, but was also a talented sevens player, and played in 13 tournaments for Scotland in the IRB Sevens, scoring 24 tries during his three-year involvement from 2005-2008.

Vernon said: "After 13 years of professional rugby I know the time is right to hang up the boots. It's been an incredible experience and one that has allowed me to realise the dreams I had as a young man in representing Scotland and winning a league title with the Warriors.

"I've been lucky to play for some great clubs with outstanding players, coaches and support staff and I have memories with them that I can treasure for life. After working for Aberdeen Standard Investments this season, now is the time for me to build my new career in the city and I am really excited for the challenge."



GLASGOW RUGBY

FAN-ZONE BLOG
@thepenGW

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THE WARRIORS STRIKE BACK THIRD TIME LUCKY AGAINST SARACENS?

Well by the end of March, we'll know if we are out of Europe.

We'll have a clearer outlook on the future and we'll be able to plan for the future. Or could there be an unexpected twist and

that a tad ambitious?

Well, let's face it, it's going to be tough. Sarries, as I've said on many occasions, are one of the benchmarks in European rugby that the Warriors need to overcome if they are to be taken seriously

"The Warriors need 80 minutes of solid, water tight defending and to be clinical when chances to take points come their way."

we remain... after all, the Champions Cup can throw up all sorts of unexpected turns.

What? You thought I was talking about something else?

Yes it's part three of the Saracens trilogy. I hear it's already been given a working title of "The Warriors Strike Back" but is

as one of the top clubs in the competition. Defeating them is incredibly tough and defeating them at home is even tougher.

To accomplish it, Glasgow need a fully fit squad, firing on all cylinders... Well, I foresee a couple of issues there. The Warriors treatment table has been climbed on and off of more

than Mount Everest. DTH and Matt Smith are out for the season, Wilson, Hoggy and Shug are all missing at the moment and may not be back in time. Then there is the form. Glasgow struggled to put Cardiff and Ospreys to bed and conceded a few cheap points against Connacht as well. Saracens create enough chances of their own without being gifted the opportunities and Glasgow will need to be clinical with the ball and 100% focused in defence to get a result.

So can they do it? Well, yes of course they can. It's two teams, 80 minutes of rugby and things can go for the underdog sometimes. But do I see it going Glasgow's way? No. In all honesty I don't. The Warriors went toe to toe with Sarries for 40 minutes and it was thrilling stuff to watch but they couldn't keep it going for the full

game and that for me is where the downfall is likely to be. Saracens are 2nd in the Gallagher Premiership and they will fancy a league and Champions Cup double and won't be about to let Glasgow rain on that parade. The Warriors need 80 minutes of solid, water tight defending and to be clinical when chances to take points come their way. Leave a try out on that field, Sarries will punish you, likewise a lapse in defensive concentration.

Progressing to the next round is not the be all and end all but if Edinburgh manage to beat Munster to get to the semi-finals then imagine an all Scottish affair with Murrayfield packed out and a guaranteed Scottish finalist. The stuff dreams are made of eh? Well let's hope all goes to plan and if we do get it, I'll make sure I'm not at Old Trafford again!



GLASGOW INTO EUROPEAN QUARTER-FINALS

After failing to make it out of their pool last season, Glasgow Warriors have sealed a quarter-final place in this year's Heineken Champions Cup. SCRUM takes a look at their pool stage run

GAME 1: SARACENS (H)

Glasgow Warriors kicked off their 2018/19 campaign in a home tie against two-time champions Saracens.

Saracens were the first to open the scoring as a well-worked backline move saw backrow Michael Rhodes dive over in the corner for an all-too-easy score after just 12 minutes, with Owen Farrell providing the extras.

But after a shaky start, Glasgow settled into the game as they worked their way inside the Saracens half, piling pressure on their London

visitors in the minutes leading up to half-time.

Unfortunately for the home side, they failed to convert this pressure into points when, after turning down three shots at goal, a DTH van de Merwe try was chalked off due to a penalty given away at the previous breakdown.

With only 10 points separating the two sides, the second half was a cagey affair as Glasgow tested the Saracens defence with some neat backline play, stretching them out wide. Saracens' defence stood firm, however, and the game ended 13-3 to Saracens.

GLASGOW WARRIORS: 3 SARACENS: 13

SARACENS SCORERS:

TRIES: RHODES

CONS: FARRELL

PENS: FARRELL (2)

GLASGOW WARRIORS SCORERS:

PENS: HASTINGS

GAME 2: CARDIFF BLUES (A)

CARDIFF BLUES: 12 GLASGOW WARRIORS: 29

GLASGOW WARRIORS SCORERS:

TRIES: HASTINGS, VAN DER MERWE,
PRICE, J. GRAY

CONS: HASTINGS (3)

PENS: HASTINGS

CARDIFF BLUES SCORERS:

TRIES: SUMMERHILL (2)

COS: ANSCOMBE

The following week was brighter for Glasgow as an away trip to Cardiff Blues ended in a comfortable win for Dave Rennie's side.

Unlike in their game against Saracens, Glasgow started quickly, and after some sustained pressure in the Cardiff 22, they notched their first try inside two minutes as young fly-half Adam Hastings swerved over from close range. It didn't take long for them to double their money though, and Glasgow claimed their second in the fourth minute after a break from Huw Jones put DTH van de Merwe in to score. A Hastings penalty from in front of the posts took Glasgow to a 15-0 lead at half time.

Glasgow made an equally fast start to the second half as Ali Price ran in another try for his side with two minutes played. Cardiff answered back with a try of their own, though, as they scored in the corner through winger Aled Summerhill on only their seventh visit into the Glasgow half.

Then in 66th minute, Glasgow scored a contender for team try of the season as lock Jonny Gray dotted down under the sticks after they went end to end, thanks to some deft moments from Adam Hastings. Despite Cardiff's Summerhill grabbing his second try soon after, the game ended in a bonus-point win for Glasgow.

LYON: 22 GLASGOW WARRIORS: 42

GLASGOW WARRIORS SCORERS:
TRIES: ASHE (2), HORNE, HOGG, JONES
CONS: HASTINGS (4)
PENS: HASTINGS (3)

LYON SCORERS:
TRIES: ARNOLD, NAKAITACI, MCLEOD
CONS: PÉLISSIE, DOUSSAIN
PENS: PÉLISSIE

GAME 3: LYON (A)

Next up for Glasgow in the European competition was Top 14 side Lyon in back-to-back fixtures. With both teams coming off a strong run of games in their respective domestic competitions, this was a hard one to call but with Saracens dominating the pool, Glasgow needed another victory to stay on their heels.

As expected, the game began as a tight contest with the sides trading penalties in the early exchanges. It was not until the 20th minute that a try was scored when George

Horne, having made a break from the base of a ruck, offloaded the ball to Adam Ashe for him to score the game's first try.

It did not take long for Lyon to hit back though as winger Toby Arnold dived over in the corner, with scrum-half Jonathan Pélissié knocking the conversion over from out-wide to turn it into a three-point game.

The game continued to be nip-and-tuck until Glasgow's Adam Ashe sealed the contest with his second try in the 77th minute.

Another bonus point win for Glasgow.

GAME 4: LYON (A)

Having downed Lyon away, Glasgow welcomed them to Scotstoun. But while the first game was an advert for running rugby, the second was hampered by the dreary December conditions in Scotland.

That didn't stop Glasgow getting off to another fast start, however, as Niko Matawalu latched onto the end of a Stuart Hogg grubber to register the first points for the home side with less than a minute on the clock. Though he failed in his conversion attempt, Adam Hastings knocked over a pair penalty in the next few

minutes to put Glasgow 11 points to the good.

Hogg and Matawalu combined again moments later to give the Fijian his second try of the day, and Glasgow a commanding 18-point lead heading into half time. Hogg spilled a kick straight into the arms of Lyon's Xavier Mignot and Pierre-Louis Barassi bundled. The tide then looked to be turning Lyon's way, but a forearm to the face of Hastings saw Lyon lock Etienne Oosthuizen shown a red card. With 10 minutes left to play, this proved a decisive blow and Glasgow closed out the game out to make three wins out of four in their European campaign.

GLASGOW WARRIORS: 21 LYON: 10

GLASGOW WARRIORS SCORERS:
TRIES: MATAWALU (2)
CONS: HASTINGS
PENS: HASTINGS (3)

LYON SCORERS:
TRIES: BARASSI
CONS: DOUSSAIN
PENS: DOUSSAIN

GLASGOW WARRIORS: 33 CARDIFF BLUES: 24

CARDIFF BLUES SCORERS:
TRIES: LANE (2), MILLARD, NAVIDI
CONS: EVANS (2)

GLASGOW WARRIORS SCORERS:
TRIES: STEWART, CUMMINGS, FUSARO, KEBBLE, HORNE
CONS: THOMSON (4)

GAME 5: CARDIFF BLUES (H)

Glasgow welcomed the Cardiff Blues to Scotstoun in January, and they were looking to notch their first win of the new year.

They started the game the brighter - after a long period of possession in the Cardiff half, Glasgow set up a driving lineout that saw Grant Stewart dot down. Not long after, Scott Cummings crashed over to stretch Glasgow's lead.

Cardiff hit back just before the break, as the ball was spun wide for Owen Lane and Dan Fish to combine and orchestrate a score.

The second half started similarly to the first, as Glasgow trundled over for another score thanks to their driving lineout while a beautifully crafted backs' move gave Cardiff their second try of the game.

Oli Kebble then secured the try-scoring bonus point for Glasgow, scoring his side's fourth with a powerful surge for the line. Two more slick tries for Cardiff took the game to within four points with 10 minutes to go.

The ever-sniping George Horne took the game, and the losing bonus point, away from Cardiff with an opportunistic try in the final minute.

GAME 6: SARACENS (A)

Despite their place in the quarter-finals booked thanks to Edinburgh's heroics against Montpellier the night before, Glasgow's second game against Saracens was an eight-try thriller.

Although they initially went behind to an early Ben Spencer try, Glasgow were quick to get on the score-sheet themselves, and they lead the game 12-10 after 14 minutes.

The two sides then traded tries with prop Vincent Koch finishing an emphatic drive for

Saracens and with Ryan Wilson powering over for Glasgow before a Billy Vunipola try gave the hosts a 24-19 lead going into the break.

At the start of the second half, the game hung in the balance as neither side could find a decisive breakthrough. The score stayed locked until Maro Itoje finished off a Saracen break down the touchline to put the London side 13 points ahead, and the game out of Glasgow's reach. Replacement lock Will Skelton then added another five points to Saracens' tally after a wayward George Horne chip gifted the hosts' possession in extra time.

SARACENS: 38 GLASGOW WARRIORS: 19

SARACENS SCORERS:
TRIES: SPENCER, KOCH, B. VUNIPOLA, ITOJE, SKELTON
CONS: SPENCER (3), LOZOWSKI (2)
PENS: SPENCER

GLASGOW WARRIORS SCORERS:
TRIES: SEYMOUR, PRICE, WILSON
CONS: HASTINGS (2)





ASHE AWARE THAT A 'HUGE CHALLENGE' AWAITS AS GLASGOW PREPARE FOR SARACENS

Glasgow Warriors are no strangers to facing Saracens in Heineken Champions Cup action. The two sides met in the pool stages this season, and Glasgow's only previous foray into the knockout stages also brought up a trip to Allianz Park.

In those three meetings, Dave Rennie's side have yet to taste victory, but that is something back-row Adam Ashe is keen to change when Glasgow head to north London for the second time this season on 30 March.

Ashe started at number eight in the 2017 quarter-final and may well do so again given the injury to Ryan Wilson and is looking forward to the challenge of knocking off the two-time former champions.

He said: "It's a massive game at a really exciting time of the season for us. A lot of the guys here have just come back after time off; we'll have some guys coming back from the Scotland Six Nations squad so they might feel a bit different; but most of the guys are fresh and looking forward to a big few weeks of rugby."

Ashe also reflected on the "huge challenge" of beating Saracens on their own patch as Glasgow look to reach the last four of a European competition for the first time in their history.

"We are a team who rises to these challenges," Ashe said, while adding of Mark McCall's men: "They are a top team who have won a lot of European games and they always show up in the big knockout games."

"It's going to be two good teams going against each other – there's always a bit of fisticuffs when we play them so I'm sure it will be good viewing."

Ashe also reflected on an injury-hit Glasgow side that may well make the trip without

Scotland internationalists Stuart Hogg, Tommy Seymour, Huw Jones and Wilson, all of whom were injured during Scotland's Guinness Six Nations campaign.

Ashe believes "two or three" of those may return in time for the quarter-final but was keen to stress the strength in depth of the Glasgow squad.

"The results of the last few weeks [during the Six Nations] have shown we've got good strength in depth and whoever is available, we'll have a squad that's more than capable of competing."

The 25-year-old, who has six Scotland caps, also reflected on Glasgow's last quarter-final appearance, admitting they probably got their approach to stopping Owen Farrell, Alex Goode and Co. wrong.

He said: "I remember it was really physical and fast. We had decided to leave their breakdown and looked to fill the field but the result probably shows we got it wrong. One of their strengths is how they attack the breakdown so that's going to be a work-on for us going into this game."

The Livingston-born back-rower is also aware of the impact of the Warrior Nation, Glasgow's band of supporters, who he hopes will make the trip to London en masse.

"I was on the bench there [earlier this season] and all we could hear were our fans chanting 'Glasgow, Glasgow' and it really does give you a boost when you're out on the pitch. We feel we've got a good connection with our fans and hopefully they'll be there in numbers."

Asked about the prospect of facing Edinburgh in a Heineken Champions Cup last four clash, which may happen if both sides win their quarter-finals, the former Stirling County man added: "It would be amazing. They've proved themselves to be a really good side and we've struggled against them this season, so it would be a chance for us to right those wrongs."

"We'll just take one game at a time, though."

Ashe, and Glasgow, will need to be fully focused and likely produce their performance of the season if they are to beat a Saracens side laden with British and Irish Lions and reach their first-ever European semi-final.



ALLY HOGG ON HIS TRANSITION FROM PRO RUGBY TO THE OFFICE

He was one of the finest back-row players of his generation, winning 48 caps for his country and making more than a century of appearances for Newcastle Falcons before, at the end of last season, deciding to hang up his boots.

Now, Ally Hogg is working with Barclays Wealth Management in Newcastle, and the former Scotland, Edinburgh and Falcons back-row caught up with *SCRUM* about his transition from the professional game into the workplace.

The 36-year-old said: "I knew as my career was coming to the end, I'd have to do a bit of forward thinking, so I did a bit of work experience alongside playing, including some marketing work at local firms, who I was introduced to through coaching contacts at Newcastle.

"IFA Investment Management invited me in on my days off, I did that for 18 months-two years and really enjoyed the business, especially the investment side of it."

Hogg was then dealt a double blow, as he found out there would be no extension to his contract at Kingston Park, while IFA Investment Management were also not forthcoming with a job offer.

Hogg explained how The Big One, Newcastle's fundraising match for the My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation last year, led him to his current role.

"I met my boss and got the interview

through being at St James' Park for Newcastle's game against Northampton Saints. Barclays were one of the many firms who had been raising money for the My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation, and had asked for a couple of Falcons players to meet them before kick-off. So I asked one of the staff if they had any Wealth Management, to which he said yes, so I handed my CV in, explained what I'm about, what I've been doing and what I wanted to get into."

The Stirling-born back-row admits he did consider extending his playing career elsewhere, but ultimately decided that his family ties to Newcastle were too great.

"I could have played in the Championship in England, but when you've got a wife and two school-age kids, to move the whole family somewhere else for probably just another year before you hang up the boots just didn't seem fair on anybody. I think it felt like the natural time for me to retire, which has worked out for me so far," he said.

While his playing days are now at an end, Hogg hasn't stepped away from rugby entirely. He is Citing Commissioner for the RFU, something he admits has allowed him to see the game from a different perspective.

"My big concern was going from playing, to not being involved in rugby, I would have loved to be a professional coach, but I've chosen to put my family first, as it would be really difficult to organise things on the

weekend with the kids, in a coaching role.

"David [Barnes, Head of Discipline for the RFU] wanted to get some ex and current players involved, I was offered the job when I was still playing, but due to the conflict of interests, I wasn't given anything to work on. At that point, I didn't know how much rugby I would have in my life and I didn't want to have none, so it sounded good to me."

Hogg also looked back on a five-year international career that saw him come within two caps shy of a half century for his country, and reflected on being banished from the international scene under then-Scotland Head Coach Andy Robinson.

"I'd pretty much played 48 times in a row, Andy Robinson then took over and he didn't pick me again, I did play a couple of 'A' games after that, but it wasn't to be," he said of the end to his international career.

"It's a bit disappointing that I didn't get into the squad after that but sometimes your face just doesn't fit. But that's just professional sport. Moving to Newcastle probably didn't help matters; if I'd stayed at Edinburgh, I would have been in the shop window a little bit more.

"Newcastle didn't go terribly well that year either, and got relegated the following year so that probably played a part. At the time, you question whether it's the right decision but now, looking back on the whole of my career, it was the right one for my family. My two girls have settled here so I wouldn't change anything."

Hogg picked out Calcutta Cup wins in 2006 and 2008 among his international highlights, as well as the quarter-final of the Rugby World Cup against Argentina in 2007.

He concluded: "It's the different stadiums you play in that you remember, the 'Cake Tin' in Wellington was a brilliant experience, played in Australia which was pretty cool too.

"You get to play in all these different environments and hostilities, like playing in a football stadium in Argentina, with all the fans chanting."





Hogg in his Scotland days and left, playing for Newcastle Falcons.

TENNENT'S PREMIERSHIP REGULAR SEASON REVIEW

Another Tennent's Premiership season is all but done and of course, it represents the last one of its kind ahead of the inauguration of Super 6. Over 18 rounds of regular season fixtures, 10 clubs have fought for the right to be involved in the end-of-season play-offs, which will comprise the usual suspects.

The top four were separated by less than 10 points, with Ayr topping the standings ahead of Heriot's Currie and Melrose in what was an intriguing final weekend; Watsonians, Stirling County and Boroughmuir weren't a million miles away. Newcomers Edinburgh Accies found the going tough but enjoyed some glory in the latter stages, whilst

Glasgow Hawks and Hawick struggled but also found their respective groove at times.

The last Premiership as we know it has been full of twists and turns, with a few more to come before the champions are declared in April.



AYR

LEAGUE WINS: 14 (from 18)
SCOTTISH CUP: SEMI-FINAL v MELROSE
TOP SCORER: FRAZIER CLIMO (167)
MOST TRIES: PADDY DEWHIRST (9)

PERFORMANCE: Perennial title challengers Ayr have been at it again this season, topping the regular Tennent's Premiership but interestingly scoring fewer points than their play-off rivals. A double-header in the league and cup against Melrose will determine how successful this campaign will be viewed in retrospect, but Peter Murchie's first stint as Head Coach has been very positive, with eight consecutive wins a fine way to kick things off. Highlights included a 32-24 bonus-point win at Goldenacre in round four of the Premiership, featuring a double from Kyle Rowe and further tries through Steven Longwell and that man Climo. Although Ayr tasted defeat in their final league fixture away at Watsonians, from a winning position, their points in the bank from a thoroughly excellent season ensured they finished top of the pile once more and are favourites to wrestle back Scotland's top club honour come April.

HERIOT'S

LEAGUE WINS: 13
SCOTTISH CUP: SEMI-FINAL v HAWICK
TOP SCORER: ROSS JONES (183)
MOST TRIES: CRAIG ROBERTSON (14)
PERFORMANCE: In Phil Smith's final season as Head Coach before Super 6 kicks in, the Edinburgh side staged a rousing second half to their campaign that has kept alive hopes of emulating their huge success over the course of the past five years. The league's top scorers with 569 points, Heriot's began with impressive wins over Glasgow Hawks and Edinburgh Accies, as well as local rivals Watsonians, before stuttering at home in games with Ayr, Melrose and Currie to make their task harder come return fixtures. Perhaps their most telling win came at the Greenyards in mid-January, knowing that anything less than victory would put Smith's men up against the play-off odds. Without relinquishing the lead at any point, they duly delivered a bonus-point 26-21 victory with tries from backs Robert Kay, Alex Ball, Craig Robertson and Charlie Simpson, the metronomic Ross Jones sealing things from the tee en-route to clinching a home play-off against Currie.

CURRIE CHIEFTAINS

LEAGUE WINS: 13

SCOTTISH CUP: QUARTER-FINAL loss to Ayr (34-19)

TOP SCORER: GREGOR HUNTER (141)

MOST TRIES: BEN ROBBINS (16)

PERFORMANCE: With the bit between their teeth after missing out on a Super 6 franchise, Currie set about trying to prove their worth and enjoyed another excellent regular season that reaped 12 bonus points. Not many of their matches finished with much more than a score in it, no fewer than eight Premiership games involving the Malleny Park side having seven points or less between the teams. Indeed, Currie's most important game of the season came arguably at home to Heriot's in round 15, where they squeaked home by the narrowest of margins to maintain play-off aspirations. In a typically close affair with their Edinburgh rivals, Chieftains looked to have run out of time as the game's denouement fast approached. With time dead, talismanic fly-half Gregor Hunter landed a long-range drop goal to seal a memorable 11-10 win that effectively secured Currie's place in the end-of-season battle.



MELROSE

LEAGUE WINS: 12

SCOTTISH CUP: SEMI-FINAL v AYR

TOP SCORER: PATRICK ANDERSON (60)

MOST TRIES: PATRICK ANDERSON (12)

PERFORMANCE: Not the end to the campaign that the defending Premiership side would have anticipated, as they slid to fourth on the back of three successive defeats to Heriot's, Currie and Boroughmuir. Things started so brightly for Rob Chrystie's charges, racking up the bones of 100 points in their

first two games and only losing once in their opening 13 league fixtures. The whole squad contributed to some stellar attacking rugby before the turn of the year, a one-point win away at Currie proving to be decisive come the end of the regular season. That match, in mid-October, was a thriller, Melrose snatching a 32-31 victory from the jaws of defeat as they agonisingly watched their opponent ultimately fail with a conversion to take the spoils. They nearly let a play-off place slip by virtue of those aforementioned three straight late season losses, but Melrose, as they always do, made the play-offs.



WATSONIANS

LEAGUE WINS: 12

SCOTTISH CUP: QUARTER-FINAL loss to Melrose (25-8)

TOP SCORER: LEE MILLAR (154)

MOST TRIES: JOSH ROWLAND (15)

PERFORMANCE: Stevie Lawrie's last season before taking up a new role under Richard Cockerill at Edinburgh was so very nearly one to remember, as they missed out on fourth spot effectively through a lack of bonus points. With 12 wins, 'Sonians mirrored Melrose, but a couple of costly defeats were more reason that they just fell short, namely a penultimate round 19-14 loss to Edinburgh Accies at Raeburn Place. There were notable bright spots for the Myreside club though, demonstrated by a gritty 16-5 win over Heriot's in November and a thrilling 25-20 success through at Ayr, whereby they held firm for the entire second period without scoring a point to protect their half-time lead. 'Sonians also gave game time to some great young talent, most notably forwards Jack Stanley and Conor Boyle, both of whom will doubtlessly go on to play full professional rugby at some point.

STIRLING COUNTY

LEAGUE WINS: 8

SCOTTISH CUP:

QUARTER-FINAL loss to Hawick (31-27)

TOP SCORER: ANDREW GOUDIE (104)

MOST TRIES: ANDREW GOUDIE (8)

PERFORMANCE: Buoyed by news of a Super 6 franchise and the impending arrival of Ben Cairns as Head Coach for next season, County enjoyed a strong end to their Premiership campaign, winning their final three fixtures against Glasgow Hawks, Hawick and Boroughmuir, although they did lose to the borderers in the last eight of the Scottish Cup. The previous season's cup runners-up got their 2018/19 fixture list off to a flyer by winning the Charity Shield 28-26 against Melrose way back in August, with player/coach Peter Jericevich among the visiting try scorers and Jonny Hope nailing a last-gasp penalty to reap some revenge against the double winners. Four consecutive defeats meant Stirling didn't enjoy victory in the league in December, bucking that trend with an enthralling, seven-try win away at Boroughmuir in mid-January, the start of their three-game run that clinched sixth place for the Bridgehaugh side.

BOROUGHMUIR

LEAGUE WINS: 8

SCOTTISH CUP: FIRST ROUND loss to Melrose (28-36)

TOP SCORER: JOHNNY MATTHEWS (95)

MOST TRIES: JOHNNY MATTHEWS (19)

PERFORMANCE: A frustrating season in parts for the Meggetland men, who brought in a raft of new signings in a bid to threaten a play-off place, although it never materialised. Early season wins over Hawick and Hawks were welcomed, but it wasn't until 'Muir thumped Currie 41-17 in November that they tasted victory over one of the so-called top teams. A six-try demolition job featured a brace of tries from runaway hooker Johnny Matthews, whose astonishing return of 19 Premiership tries evoked memories of Jack Turley at Heriot's the season before.

They managed a league double over the three sides that finished below them, as well as claiming the last day scalp of Melrose, meaning Boroughmuir finished well clear of any relegation threat. Graham Shiel is set to join the club as their Super 6 Head Coach ahead of next season, when 'Muir will be quietly confident that a few tweaks here and there could result in a genuine title threat.



GLASGOW HAWKS

LEAGUE WINS: 3

SCOTTISH CUP: FIRST ROUND

loss to Stirling County (27-12)

TOP SCORER: LIAM BRIMS (77)

MOST TRIES: BOBBY BEATTIE (6)

PERFORMANCE: Things never really clicked for Hawks in 2018/19, mustering as they did a mere three league victories all season. They waited until week four to taste success, with a thrilling 47-27 win away at Hawick containing seven tries, including one for now-Scotland squad member Grant Stewart. Hawks' campaign was punctuated by several heavy defeats, although a particular highlight would surely be their 32-27 home win over high-flying Currie Chieftains, a result that proved a decent side lingers somewhere within. Scoring tries and conceding plenty proved to be the Glaswegians' undoing and when you factor in their shipping of some 644 points - a league high - it's not hard to assess where things went wrong. Some talented youngsters coming through, as ever, and the club would be in pole position should Super 6 expand in the not-too-distant future.



HAWICK

LEAGUE WINS: 4

SCOTTISH CUP: SEMI FINAL v HERIOT'S

TOP SCORER: LEE ARMSTRONG (77)

MOST TRIES: ANDREW MITCHELL (6)

PERFORMANCE: It took the Mansfield Park side an age to register their first win of 2018/19, just about getting over the line in round five against Boroughmuir (32-28) after four deflating losses at the start of the season.

Scoring was the problem for Hawick, averaging a meagre 14 points per game, although there were good displays dotted in amongst the losses, most notably a 35-15 win over Stirling County in October that was inspired by the evergreen stand-off Lee Armstrong. The Greens' real joy was found in the Scottish Cup, where their run to the last four included a most welcome trouncing of local rivals Gala, preceding a last-eight win over County to set up their Heriot's clash.

EDINBURGH ACADEMICAL

LEAGUE WINS: 2

SCOTTISH CUP: FIRST ROUND loss to HERIOT'S (29-20)

TOP SCORER: RICHARD MILL (46)

MOST TRIES: THREE PLAYERS (3)

PERFORMANCE: It understandably took Accies a while to adjust to life in the Premiership, as is always the case, but they undoubtedly improved week on week and would've won three of their last four league fixtures were it not for a single point loss to Hawks. That result straddled impressive wins over Hawick (37-7) and Watsonians, who went down to their Edinburgh colleagues 19-14 at the tail end of January. That particular win was the season high for Accies, emerging from a pointless first half and grinding out a win that usually epitomises the top sides.

The capital outfit will take heart from the last few weeks of their return to the top flight and should compete next season when Super 6 sides depart the Premiership.



JOHNNY ON THE SPOT AFTER



FINISHING TOP TRY-SCORER



Johnny Matthews in action for Boroughmuir against Edinburgh Accie

In Scotland, you don't find many Liverpool-born rugby players plying their trade, nor do you find many hookers finishing the season as top try-scorer.

However, Boroughmuir's Johnny Matthews is quite the exception, having made the move up north in 2017, the forward has enjoyed a very strong season, finishing on 19 tries in the Tennent's Premiership.

The 25-year old began his rugby career in his hometown, before moving to West Yorkshire at 16 to play for the Leeds Academy, also joining local side Otley RFC at club level.

From there, the talented hooker then continued his development with Manchester-based Sedgley Park for a few years, before fancying a change at the end of the 2016/17 season.

Following a chat with friend and former Edinburgh forward Robin Hislop, who also turned out for the Meggetland men, Johnny believed a move to Edinburgh would be a good fit, and hasn't looked back since.

During his time with Boroughmuir, he has twice been involved as back-up for Richard Cockerill's Edinburgh team, and feels that experience has helped develop him as a player.

"I've gone in while they've had players away on international duty, just as hooker cover, so it was good to get a chance to train with those guys, learn from professional players and I feel it's helped me come on as a player in that environment.

"Even over the short spells, Richard Cockerill is a good coach and he teaches you little things, which don't at the time seem that important but it really does help to improve your game. Roddy Grant was great too when I was involved with them," he said.

With 19 tries to his name, it has been a very impressive season for the hooker, who explains a lot of those scores he was fortunate to be on the end of.

"Over the course of my career, I've always been able to get on the back of the mauls, so obviously let everyone else do the hard work and you just put the ball over the line. That's the way it went this season, we had a really

strong maul set up and I just happened to be on the back of it quite a lot.

"From a personal level, it's been a good season for me scoring all these tries - it definitely wasn't something I was expecting at the start of the year!

Boroughmuir finished the Tennent's Premiership in seventh place, two points adrift of sixth-placed Stirling County, having secured eight wins and 12 bonus points from their 18 matches.

Johnny admitted the squad were disappointed with their league position but said factors had gone against them throughout the campaign.

"As a team, we probably fell short of where we wanted ourselves to be at the start of the season. Chris Laidlaw was out the majority of the campaign and Tom Wilson took a bad knock early on, so you've lost your half-back partnership through injury, which is never ideal.

"Dan Winning was also out for almost the whole season, although he had a great game on his comeback [in the 14-12 win over Melrose on the final day of the season]. When we played well, we were really good but ultimately, we weren't consistent enough," he added.

Looking forward, the hooker is focused on staying with the Meggetland club. Of his personal future, he said: "For us as a club, I would say we'd be looking for a little bit more consistency, but also to play to our potential.

"We've had a good season on and off the pitch, so we want to carry that forward. We've got a moto: 'One club, one culture, one community', we want to live by that and develop it too.

"From a personal point of view, I don't really know. I definitely want to stay at Boroughmuir, I love it here. Sevens season is coming round the corner, so we'll enjoy that, then we'll get a bit of time off and I'll set my goals from there," Johnny explained.

Matthews remained philosophical about the prospects of a return to the Edinburgh set-up in the immediate future. He concluded: "Going back to Edinburgh isn't something I necessarily set as a target, if it happens, it happens. It all depends on injuries and availability of those players, they've got four really good hookers in that squad, so it's just one of these things."



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Dave Millard heads up the Esportif Scotland office, he was born in Fiji and is a former professional player himself, having played for Glasgow, Coventry and Scotland 7's.

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CAIRNS LOOKING FORWARD TO NEW CHALLENGE WITH COUNTY

After 10 years with Currie Chieftains, Ben Cairns left the Malleney Park club at the turn of the year to become Stirling County's Super 6 franchise Head Coach. SCRUM caught up with him to discuss the move.

There is a saying that a week is a long time in sport. A decade then, must feel like you are well and truly part of the furniture. Ben Cairns left Currie Chieftains at the beginning of 2019 to take up a new role as Head Coach of Stirling County's Super 6 franchise after a decade with the Malleney Park club.

When his move was announced, the former centre tweeted: "I've spent almost a third of my life involved at the club [Currie] so it was a really tough decision to leave.

"However, I've never hidden my ambition to coach at the top level. I see Super 6 as the next step and it's a privilege to lead Stirling [County] into this new and exciting era for Scottish Rugby."

When Cairns spoke to *SCRUM*, he admitted leaving Malleney Park after his 10 years of involvement was a wrench, adding: "It was a big decision to apply for the Stirling County role. I was a at Currie for three years as a player and 7 as Head Coach so it was a difficult decision to make.

"The hardest part was deciding whether I would apply in the first place - Stirling County was the only Super 6 job I applied for because I felt that the club has a lot of similarities to Currie."

The 33-year-old, whose Test career saw him win seven caps for Scotland a decade ago, said Stirling County had been "brilliant" about Cairns' switch, and that he had remained involved - albeit from further afield than before - with some 1st XV matters at Currie, where his brother Mark is leading the coaching set-up.

A good run of form has seen the Malleney Park side leapfrog Melrose into second place in the table and Cairns was pleased to see his former side doing so well. He said: "I've still been involved through January but Mark has done a good job - they've had a great month and are in a really good position.

"It is strange, I suppose, to watch them doing so well but I'm pleased for them - it would have been hard if I felt that my decision had affected the performances, but that hasn't happened which is really good."

Cairns, who played more than 100 games for Edinburgh in his professional career, and remains the capital club's leading all-time try scorer in European competition, has already turned his attentions to next season, despite a wealth of uncertainty around how Super 6 will work.

"That is not for me to say," he replied when asked how he thought the season's

structure would look for the six franchises. "That's for Scottish Rugby to announce."

For now, Cairns' attentions are on "planning and recruitment" at Stirling County, both on the playing front and for a coaching team.

While he insisted no decisions have been made about his assistants, he added: "The current coaching team are in my thoughts. I think it would be wrong not to have guys who know the club already. These are the kind of discussions we're having just now, if the current coaches can commit to Super 6."

He did, though, rule out any possibility of his brother Mark following him to Stirling: "He couldn't commit to it with his business and he wants to give back to Currie," Cairns continued.

He is pleased to have started his new role so early, with Super 6 still some months off its scheduled kick-off. Cairns also admits his new role has been a learning curve, but one that he is relishing.

"It's a good lead-in time from January to the new season - there is a lot to get through and I am learning all the time. It is maybe not what I got into coaching for; I want to coach to be out on the pitch with the boys; but I am learning a lot about budgets, planning and recruitment."

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WHAT DUTY OF CARE DO YOU OWE?

Duty of Care is about individual wellbeing, welfare, compliance and good practice.

Whatever your involvement in sport, whether you are responsible for players, coaches, volunteers, ground staff or grassroots participants, have a moral and a legal obligation to ensure that everyone is fully protected from any personal physical and/or emotional harm, either on the premises or when engaged in activities relating to the establishment.

The term Duty of Care was brought to the fore recently when Lady Grey-Thompson (previously Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson) produced the comprehensive Duty of Care in Sport report.

The report was published in response to increasing concerns about welfare and safety and that it felt timely “for the sport sector to consider Duty of Care in its fullest sense”.

Areas that come under the umbrella of Duty of Care that were raised in the report are:

- **Safeguarding**

“All providers should have safeguarding policies in place and they should be publicly available”

- **Safer recruitment**

“More work is needed around checking whether self-employed individuals have the appropriate qualifications and security checks to work in sport.”

- **Bullying**

“Banter can never be used as an excuse for bullying behaviour and it is important to recognise that for some, banter is a route

into bullying. Therefore boundaries need to be set and upheld.”

- **Discrimination**

“Ideally, an understanding of ED&I should be embedded throughout sporting organisations”

- **Personal safety and injury – with a focus on concussion**

All sports (even those who may not be readily thought susceptible to concussion) need to be aware of concussion protocols and work together to ensure they have something in place and communicate with other organisations.

“Contact sports should consider pre-season concussion awareness courses.”

- **Mental health**

“Staff, coaches and athletes to receive mental health awareness training and support. Organisations should foster an environment where people feel able to discuss issues or are aware of where they can go to get help, both within and outside the sport if they need help on a confidential basis”

Why is Duty of Care important?

Participant welfare should always be a high priority, but clubs should also be aware of possible repercussions if they cannot demonstrate a commitment to Duty of Care as the proposals in the report state that “Duty of Care should be a mandatory condition of future funding and all funded sports bodies should demonstrably apply it.”



Dawn Jotham is the Education Product Development Lead for Safeguarding and Duty of Care experts, EduCare Learning Ltd. Dawn has extensive experience working in educational establishments, having held the positions of Head of Year, Lead for Student welfare and Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding. Dawn worked at the University of Leicester in paediatric research before going into education.

A breach of duty occurs when one person or an organisation has a duty of care toward another person or organisation but fails to live up to that standard. A person may be liable for negligence in a personal injury case if their breach of duty caused another person's injuries or mental ill health.

By being able to demonstrate that anyone requiring training on these areas has been trained and is up to date, an organisation is able to provide evidence that they have taken reasonable precautions to ensure that the wellbeing of every person associated with the establishment is supported.

A clear benefit is that when everyone associated with their organisation can see that their wellbeing is important they feel much more valued and it builds trust and can improve performance. They will also feel empowered to raise concerns about unsafe practice and to act on their concerns.

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Who needs this service?

Sports organisations have a duty of care to ensure players and participants are well looked after and protected from harm.

As well as maintaining high levels of health and safety, and understanding how to administer first aid, clubs and organisations are increasingly focused on employing the right people and need to be confident all staff know how to spot signs of abuse and understand how to report concerns.

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HALF A CENTURY OF LIVINGSTON RFC

Livingston Rugby club has been busy celebrating its 50th anniversary this season with various events including a representative match, presentation and 1st XV league match against local rivals Linlithgow RFC, a president and captains' dinner then culminating with a gala ball at the Vu in Bathgate.

The club has grown from humble beginnings, when in 1968 Jack Nixon invited the community to a meeting to and set up a rugby club in the new town. Amongst those who attended were Alwyn

O'Neill, Jim Irvine, Kenny Campbell and Jack Lauder and soon after Livingston and District Rugby Club was established.

Livingston was granted membership of Edinburgh and District Union and all matches were played out of the town as the club didn't have a pitch!

That problem was soon solved when a field at Bankton Mains became available – a few cottages were converted into changing rooms with the help of club volunteers and rugby posts were donated

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 132

from Livingston Development co-operation.

Times have moved on since then and the East League Division 1 side are very proud of the pitches, stand and clubhouse that they now use at Almond Park. Their volunteering army remains the same and we are forever grateful of the time and effort that our volunteers contribute.

On a Sunday, the club's vibrant youth section is often seen playing teams from various parts of the country. Their senior team are now seeing the third generation of players in what is a very family orientated and friendly club, and the ladies team have recently been accepted into the league.

Over the years there has been many highlights such as players receiving age grade and full caps for Scotland, and reaching the national shield finals twice at BT Murrayfield.

To celebrate all this and more around 100 members and friends of the club met at the Vu to celebrate in style, reminiscing about the past and looking forward to seeing what is in store for the future for Livingston RFC.



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GRANTS OF BATHGATE

Grants of Bathgate has been established in the West Lothian town for four decades, with 2019 marking the 40th anniversary of the family taking over the running of the business.

As well as selling a host of furniture, ranging from sofas and beds to chairs and mattresses in their two-storey shop in the heart of Bathgate, the company also sponsors Livingston RFC, who are also celebrating a milestone anniversary in 2019 as they mark their 50th anniversary.

Grant Sutherland, one of the company's directors, said of the company's relationship with the Almond Park club: "We have been involved with Livingston rugby for three years and have been impressed with the set-up and with their youth recruitment.

"Standards are improving steadily with the enthusiastic coaching staff. Clubhouse has a very welcoming atmosphere. Their 50th anniversary is a significant landmark and we wish them well in their future endeavours."

Their rugby connections extend further than their sponsorship of Livingston, though. "The directors have a keen interest in rugby and attend some Edinburgh games and as many internationals as possible," Grant said.

"The MD is a former, not very good, player," he joked.

Looking ahead, Grant hopes that a new



Grants of Bathgate website will be able to launch soon, and believes the company is well-placed to continue serving the West Lothian community despite the difficult economic climate. He said: "Despite the uncertainty in the economy, we believe that offering decent products at fair prices combined with a friendly personal service will allow us to continue serving our customers in West Lothian."

As well as selling a range of furniture, the company has its own carpet fitter, offer a furniture assembly service, and deliver items using vehicles from their warehouse in nearby Blackburn.

For more information:
01506 633286 or
www.grantsofbathgate.co.uk



"Everything in the knee was completely wiped out, and it turned out I had severed the nerve connected to my foot. I had drop foot; I couldn't lift it at all."



WILSON ON THE COMEBACK TRAIL AFTER THREE YEARS OUT

It has been an incredible journey back from injury for Graham Wilson, who spent three years on the sidelines, in and out of hospitals, undergoing multiple surgeries and extensive rehabilitation for one of the "worst injuries" doctors had seen.

Wilson, a PE teacher at Glasgow Academy, picked up the injury in training before a 2016 Scottish Cup quarter-final with Jed-Forest. Three years, and more than a handful of surgeries later, the 33-year-old made his comeback in the same competition, at the same stage, against the same opposition.

Wilson spoke to SCRUM to recount the details of his injury. "I hadn't really had a (serious) injury before," he said.

"I was standing and got a pass I wasn't expecting, an inside ball, and I got hit by a couple of guys. As I went back my (left) knee popped out. I managed to put it back in place straight away. I didn't think it was that bad until I went to see the [Heriot's] physio Sandy Lyle, but I couldn't lift my foot up, so I went to the hospital for a scan."

The extent of the damage was not known until he received the results of the initial scan. "They [doctors] said it was one of the worst knee injuries they'd seen. Everything in the knee was completely wiped out, and it turned out I had severed the nerve connected to my foot. I had drop foot; I couldn't lift it at all."

Drop-foot symptoms are an inability or impaired ability to raise the toes or raise the foot from the ankle and can be caused by many different traumas and diseases, but also nerve damage from traumatic knee injuries.

Wilson had torn his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), fractured his patella and severed a nerve among other related injuries. Due to the extent of the damage, Wilson went straight to the top of the NHS priority list to go undergo surgery the following week.

"It's at that point I realised the seriousness of the injury," he added. "The first operation was rebuilding the knee, but I picked up an infection and a blood clot, so I needed a couple more surgeries to clean that up, including a skin graft."

The Heriot's scrum-half underwent six

surgeries on the knee and one on his foot.

"About six months later when my knee had healed, I had my ACL repaired; however, it got infected, and I had to return to the hospital for a couple of weeks. It took two operations to clean the infection.

"I had nerve conductivity tests, but I still couldn't lift my foot because the nerve was completely severed. My last operation, which was a tendon transfer, the doctors took the tendon from my right foot and attached it to my left. It managed to sort out my foot-lift issue. I had a foot-brace to help with walking, but it was kind of dragging everywhere I went."

Wilson, Heriot's all-time record points scorer with more than 2200 in his 15 seasons at Goldenacre, explained how he then started his comeback to rugby.

"After all that, there was the rehabilitation in the gym. I did a lot of work with the physios at Heriot's, who were great, and I had rehab once a month with the NHS, building my knee back up. During the rehab, I started feeling solid, and so I signed up to the Edinburgh 10km Marathon [in May 2018]."

"My knee felt fine, so I thought it was a good idea to try and make a comeback for pre-season. I spoke to the physios at Heriot's and said: 'I'm going to give it a go', so they worked with me."

He eased his way back into the game, turning out for the club's 2nd XV in the Tennent's National Reserve League, which Heriot's won.

He added: "To be honest, I just wanted to get back and play. I wasn't bothered about the level because I've always played for enjoyment. I managed to get through the season, playing for the 2nd XV. I then got picked in the 1st XV squad for the Scottish Cup Quarter-final."

It was just about getting through time on the field, exorcising the demons and doubt. He researched the injury on the internet and found that often occurred in the NFL and that players do make recoveries.

Thoughts quickly turn back to Wilson's injury and the repercussions for an amateur player; work, time out of the game, missed



opportunities and glories. "It was about eight months from the first operation to last that I had off work," he said.

"It wasn't ideal, but Glasgow Academy was brilliant with understanding my situation, looking after me and making sure everything was fine. It was frustrating for me with the timing of the injury because we won the League and Cup [double] the year before.

"I missed the finals and the Scottish Club international squad, which I was selected, and I was meant to go to the Hong Kong 10s as well, but missed out on that, too. I tried not to dwell on my misfortune too much, or I would have gone crazy, thinking 'what could have been?'"

"I didn't plan to come back and play; it was about getting back and playing sport again. I play five-a-side football, so when that felt good, I thought 'why not [play rugby again]?' I still have something to offer.

"I thought I was playing at a reasonable level because I was involved with the Club Internationals, so I didn't want to end it there. If there was a chance, I wanted to make a comeback, to play for the enjoyment and have a few more run outs with the boys."

Having recovered from his horrific injury, Wilson will hope he can extend his illustrious Heriot's career for a few more seasons to come



BRUCE AITCHISON
@happyeggshaped



TOO MUCH RUGBY...

I've been hoping for a change to the rugby calendar for a long time. At the moment the game is coping, the interest is growing in developing nations, the Women's game is flying, the international game is playing to full stadiums and the players... well they are being held together by a combination of hope and strapping tape. And the club game, well it is still a great place to be and gives people a chance to meet, play and share experiences that money can't buy, but it needs more folk to get involved. No change there then.

I'm not an authority on the world league (or much else for that matter), I don't fully know the thinking behind it and I certainly don't understand the corporate element at all, but I am a passionate supporter of the game improving.

I feel sad that the gulf between the 'big' Test nations and the rest is growing and it appears that it will be difficult to ever close it. I miss the thought of the Tier One nations going on tours to the developing nations to support their development, but money talks. Even an All Blacks test in Samoa, Georgia or Fiji won't make the host nation

much money. They need to pay the ABs for coming along and the ticket prices aren't high, hospitality packages not in high demand and TV deals not up to much.

I really miss the midweek games. We now have a generation of the rugby family who have never seen an 'A' game', or a big name play at their club ground, the way I was lucky enough to. I saw the All Blacks at Netherdale and the Springboks at the Greenyards, amazing memories.

I like the idea of a global season but not as a way to have more test matches. The international game could lose some of its magic, extra November tests are already making things more complicated as it is.

It is a good idea to make the rugby on show better, the best players playing at their best, which means rested, fully fit and full of desire. Not being wheeled out to do a turn, long after the fire inside has died, the limbs and joints ache and the familiarity bred by the analysts mean bland, play to win tactics which fail to get the crowd off their feet. The annual competitions are tough in every respect.

The Six Nations (I think, is the greatest of them all), the Rugby Championship is a bit too long with home and away games. The World Cup every four years has brought in an Olympic style cycle, so this winter a bundle of players will retire, disappear to Japan/France or concentrate on their club.

The global season should be a chance to create a spark that will ignite the game in 'new

The cost of Test matches is expensive and not accessible to everyone, this has always been the case but being on free TV is crucial to growing the game. TV money pays the clubs, players etc to keep going. But supporters not getting to watch, kids not seeing it first hand, that will be tough to lose, and I hope it is defended harder than a try line. Cricket is suffering with no longer being on free to view TV.

“The international game could lose some of its magic, extra November tests are already making things more complicated as it is.”

markets', fits into the calendar for players, supporters and TV, where there is room for everything, and each level is allowed to thrive. But just more rugby? Well, that is tough on the wallet and the time it takes up.

It seems ridiculous to play league matches during international windows. Watching a club team play without the best players isn't what supporters pay for and makes it a strange dilemma for clubs to decide who should be in their squad.

I would hate for this to happen to rugby.

I hope everyone gets to benefit from any change and the diversity of this great game of ours is maintained. I saw a great quote recently, 'When you have more than you need, build a bigger table, not a higher fence.' I hope Bill Beaumont and his World Rugby friends consider this when they make the decisions that will impact on the future of rugby as we know it.

Happiness is Egg Shaped



Raging Bull is one of the best-known names in terms of teamwear, with the company supplying kit to clubs and schools at various levels of the game across Scotland.

They are aiming to grow their brand, with links already forged with the Ayr and Stirling County Super 6 franchises, while they are the official teamwear suppliers for the My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation and there are plans in place to create commemorative clothing for the Heineken Champions Cup finals weekend in Newcastle in May.

The team at Raging Bull also believe the clubs they serve are based placed to comment on the service they receive.

Lorne Boswell, President of Stirling County RFC, said: "We are proud of our long-standing partnership with Raging Bull, they continue to provide innovative high-quality products, especially for our growing ladies and girls teams and their deliveries are speedy and reliable."

Sarah Sharkey, Ayr RFC Shop Manager, said: "Having used several suppliers in the past moving to Raging Bull has been transformational for us.

"Nigel thoroughly understands our needs and works to deliver a consistently excellent standard of service. He has a 'can do' attitude and is in control of my orders and designs from start to finish backed up by an excellent admin and design team.

"We have tried most of the products on offer and the quality is consistently high. Great quality and lots of flexibility. If we ask for a garment to be sourced, we have always been successful. Over three seasons with a playing membership of over 600, we have had very few problems which in my experience is fantastic.

"Our experience has been of good



RAGING BULL PROUD TO SUPPLY KIT TO ALL LEVELS OF THE GAME

quality kit at a fair price, small order sizes and good turnaround times from a company that demonstrates old fashioned business principles in a cut throat environment."

Douglas Stanley, Ayr's long-standing Team Manager and Kit Man, added: "A proven quality strip which lasts at the sharp end of the Scottish Rugby Premiership."

Marc Maiden, Club Captain at Corstorphine Cougars RFC, said: "At Corstorphine Cougars RFC we put a lot of pride and thought into our kit, to help attract players, and supply current players or social members with kit they want to wear socially.

"Raging Bull has supplied us with a fantastic

club shop, great kit packages from their bespoke Rio range and something for all members.

"Our minis have a brilliant reversible kit, that they love, this is given to them once their subs have been paid.

"Having smart looking kit is great for our brand, and getting our club out there, people are wearing not just on club days, but to work, the gym, school, uni, and to the shops!

"Raging Bull are a fantastic company to work with, with great staff to make sure our visions come to life."

FROM RUGBY TO GIN AND THE MIGHTY QUINN WITH BADACHRO

Back in the '70s, when Allan Quinn moved back to Scotland and rejoined the Scottish rugby union scene, this time in a coaching capacity, who knew that it would, somewhat circuitously, lead to the creation of one of Scotland's most delicious premium gins?

Many readers will recall Allan's passion, inspiration, motivating style and specialist, technical knowledge of rugby, when he coached so many Scottish club teams, including Boroughmuir FP's, West of Scotland, Corstorphine, Heriot's, Perth, not forgetting his roles as an international advisory coach for the SRU and his taking the Scottish Students rugby team on a tour of South Africa so many years ago.

Rugby ruled many aspect of Allan's family life, including the timing of holidays, and when the Quinn family headed for Gairloch in Wester Ross, on a camping holiday with some fellow rugby mates and their families, a seed was sown in the heart and head of one Quinn junior; Gordon. He kept returning to the Gairloch area with ever increasing regularity and realised that that was where he wanted to live.

Many years later and very fortunately, he and Vanessa, a rather stylish young lass with a similar love for Badachro (and a trend-setting lover of gin), met in the Badachro Inn one summer evening.....and were married 12 weeks later.

Following an exciting expat life and spells in London and Edinburgh, the couple moved permanently to Badachro to build their home, raise their kids and host bed & breakfast guests in their highly acclaimed bed and breakfast, Aird Hill. But guests wanted more.

They wanted something genuinely of Badachro to take home to family & friends and with Vanessa having trained in horticulture, the idea was born, of making something from the stunning array of wild plants and flowers in that pure, pristine wilderness. A drink perhaps?

Badachro Distillery was duly formed to make liqueurs, when one recipe development led towards a gin by the addition of juniper. That was it! A gin from Badachro might be just the answer....and the rest is history. So much so, that the name of the tiny village of Badachro has spread far beyond Scotland's shores, across Germany (where Vanessa grew up) and throughout many fine bars and eateries around London.

And why? Because Badachro Gin truly is a reflection of the north west Highlands, of the pure air, water, land, plants and flowers that define the area. Marrying traditional botanicals with hand-picked wild myrtle, gorse blossom, lavender & elderflower, the delicious taste of the last true wilderness of Europe is now bottled for gin lovers to enjoy. It's a characterful, full flavoured, absolutely

unique and delicious artisan gin from a stunning part of Scotland and it's made by hand, with love, slowly, in very small batches.

And that's how the mighty Quinn led, somewhat circuitously, to Badachro Gin (which he's still 'testing' to this day).

Perfect Serves: Ideal on its own as a sipping gin or in a classic G&T, with a quality tonic water (naturally flavoured and not too sweet) and plenty of ice and a slice of lime.

Storm Strength Badachro Gin 57° Storm Strength (57% abv) is a turbo-charged version of Badachro Gin, higher in alcohol and in flavour, for generous G&T's or cocktails with strong flavoured combinations. For connoisseurs and comedians!

Cocktail idea: Badachro Gin makes a great Gin Martini. Just add four parts gin and one part vermouth (or to taste) to lots of ice in a cocktail maker or mixing glass, shake or stir for 30 seconds, strain and add a twist of lemon or an olive. Truly delicious!

Badachro Gin is available in many bars, restaurants and hotels across Scotland.

For more information:
www.badachrodistillery.com



STUNNINGLY UNIQUE HIGHLAND GIN

BADACHRO GIN IS A TRULY AUTHENTIC EXPRESSION OF THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS.

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GREENBELT . . . YOUR HOME, YOUR WORLD, YOUR FUTURE

As a long-time supporter, partner and sponsor of rugby clubs and organisations, Greenbelt would like to wish everyone at the Melrose Sevens a fabulous day.

The Greenbelt team certainly hope the rugby is every bit as thrilling as it's been over the years.

One of the UK's leading open space land management companies, they recognise the importance of being competitive to achieve success - that's why they're acknowledged as the best organisation for achieving high-quality and sustainable living solutions.

With 60,000 household customers, and 30,000 more coming soon, Greenbelt provide a model for the long-term management of open spaces on new residential developments, with the transfer of ownership central to our industry-leading greenspace arrangement.

Their mission is to make developments

beautiful, healthy, safe places to live for the benefit of entire communities, helping enhance the value of environments and properties.

They take great care of green spaces, including hard and soft landscaping, new and mature woodlands, water features including sustainable drainage systems, private roads and entrances, and recreational structures such as play areas.

Like the best rugby coaches, the team at Greenbelt align the right management strategy for each development and its surroundings, using their experience, knowledge and understanding of open and green space environments.

They also work closely with residents to help them form community groups and ensure effective communication is established through dedicated customer liaison. All of their residents receive a Written Statement of Services - tailored uniquely to each individual site - providing details of the maintenance and

services. Make the most of your rugby with the Melrose Sevens.

Make the most of life with Greenbelt . . . enjoy your home, your world, your future!

For more information: www.greenbelt.co.uk





your home, your world, your future

A national leader in landscape management, Greenbelt provide long-term quality maintenance of open space on residential housing developments across the UK.



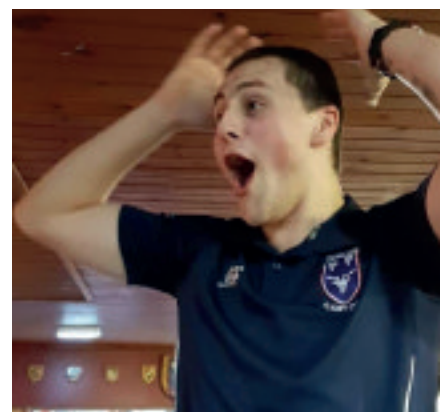
Greenbelt are well placed to deliver sustainable management to our growing family of 60,000 home-owner customer nationwide; nurturing the aesthetic value, ecological integrity and recreational potential of your local open space.

Whether you're a home owner, developer, planner or a rugby-loving sports fan ... we're here for you!





HAIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW FOR PENICUIK'S ROSS MITCHELL



Penicuik second row Ross Mitchell is celebrating raising over £2000 for charity, after having his afro cut off at the club on Saturday afternoon.

The 21-year old, who is set to graduate from a degree in Chemistry at Heriot Watt University, said he has been left overwhelmed at the scale of the money raised for rugby-based charity, Wooden Spoon Scotland.

Having grown his hair out from the age of 11 and the attention it has drawn over the years, Ross knew the potential was there to do something selfless, when the scissors came out. A grand total of £2,264.22 was recorded.

He said: "I had to make a big deal of it and make sure I did something good like raising money for charity. I honestly had no idea that

the fundraising would go that far, initially I wanted to raise £500."

"It was never my intention to go over £2000, but I am extremely happy we did and very grateful to everyone who donated," he added.

A combination of a JustGiving page and donation bucket helped the cause reach the £1000 mark, before a charity raffle at Penicuik RFC and further donations helped to more than double the total figure.

The mission of chosen charity, Wooden Spoon Scotland, through the power of rugby is to help transform the lives of children and young people across the UK and Ireland who suffer from disabilities.

Ross explained that the decision to choose the charity, was a fairly straightforward one,

after doing some research into their work.

He added: "After reading about the work they did and the efforts they put into improving the lives of others, I thought it was the perfect fit. "There was no specific indication of where the money would go, but after talking to their president, Charlie, I'm safe in the knowledge that it's going towards a project that's worthwhile and will be making a difference to kids across Scotland."

Penicuik have two fixtures left in this season in Tennent's East Region 2, in what Ross has described as a "pretty mixed" campaign. Currently sitting in mid-table, he says they are aiming for a couple of big wins to finish the season on a high, putting them in good stead for next term.



THINKING SPORTS SOLUTIONS AIM TO PROMOTE GRASSROOTS GAME

After more than quarter of a century's work in television broadcasting, Peter Lamb turned his hand to developing an app that would allow clubs across all sports to create a social media feed.

He set up Thinking Sports Solutions, an Android app that uses artificial intelligence to read scoreboards, monitor the weather, schedule social media posts, record videos clips, produce graphics and charts, and deliver all that to the club's social media channels.

Peter, Principal CEO, explained more: "I have over 25 years' experience in TV broadcast sports and it was my company that provided all of the scores and graphics for Channel 4's coverage of the cricket in the UK between 2000 and 2007. We also provided 3D analysis for five global broadcasters during the 2006 World Cup Football and the Six Nations on

more than one occasion.

"Two things struck me with regards to sports, (1) less and less people are watching TV but more and more are following their team on social media and; (2) Grassroots and lower league sports are massively under-represented in the media.

"I decided to use my TV experience to develop an App that would enable the smallest to the largest of clubs to produce a game day feed through social media the equal or better than television. The whole thing runs on a phone and will produce TV quality graphics, scores, video and analysis either automatically or with manual assist. The end result is a social media feed that people want to see.

"By delivering a professional feed, it opens up opportunities for clubs to get far more exposure (even globally) and attract revenue

through local sponsorship from the very communities in which they interact."

The company does not currently have any links with clubs in Scotland, but that is something Peter is keen to change. He added: "As a start-up company, we need to prioritise where we spend our resources and it was logical to focus on the South East where we are based but Scotland and Wales being great rugby nations is at the top of our agenda for 2019."

The company's mission statement 'To technologically automate sports social media and enable sports clubs of all sizes to be financially independent' and Peter wants to help grassroots clubs "to get the recognition and revenue they deserve."

For more information:
www.thinking-sports.com



- Give your fans a TV experience on your Social Media Channel
- Earn revenue for your club
- Involve your young people in the production process
- Build community
- Automated or Manual Assist your choice
- No club is too small to benefit from Thinking Sports Technology
- The whole thing runs on a phone
- Get your free trial copy today

thinking-sports.com



MITSUBISHI'S KIT 4 CLUBS SCHEME STILL GOING STRONG

In 2017, Official Partner to Scottish Rugby, Mitsubishi Motors in the UK launched the Kit 4 Clubs scheme to help support the future of Scottish Rugby. The initiative was set up to provide rugby clubs and schools from around Scotland with playing kit and training equipment. In return for completing vehicle appraisals and test drives, the kit provided helps aid the development of the next generations playing the game.

Top Scottish Rugby International, Hamish Watson attended the launch of the scheme last year with a special training session for pupils at Trinity Academy in Edinburgh. The session saw Hamish offer advice and tips to the pupils during skills and drills sessions that used the full range of playing kit available on the scheme. "The game is in great shape at the moment and last year's

partnership between Mitsubishi Motors and Scottish Rugby has helped provide essential kit and equipment for youngsters keen to play rugby. The more clubs we can equip and schools we can kit out, the more chance we will have of growing the game even further and creating a brighter future for Scottish Rugby", Scotland Flanker Watson said of the scheme.

Access to the branded Macron and Gilbert playing kit and equipment, which includes match shirts, practice bibs, tackle pads and balls, will help increase participation in the game and the nurturing of Scottish rugby for years to come. The scheme is open to all full member clubs and schools affiliated to Scottish Rugby. In return for club members, friends and family creating an appointment to have a vehicle appraisal and test drive a new or used Mitsubishi

vehicle, each club/school are credited with £30 to put towards their new kit/equipment. Once a club reaches an initial target of £300, they can begin ordering items.

Martin Woodward, Partnership Engagement Manager of Mitsubishi Motors, said: "We are very proud to continue our commitment to supporting grassroots Scottish Rugby. The Kit 4 Clubs scheme has already provided a number of clubs and schools with access to much needed playing kit and training equipment. We look forward to providing more kit crucial to increasing participation and developing the sport in the region."

For more information about the Kit 4 Clubs scheme:
www.mitsubishi-cars.co.uk/kit4clubs/scotland/

HONOURS EVEN FOR EAST LOTHIAN AND CANADIAN TOURING SIDE

Two teams from the East Lothian Girls Rugby club took on a touring Canadian school from Owen Sound District High School at the Pennyvit, Prestonpans.

East Lothian Girls Rugby were formed in March 2017, with the teams currently coached by Roger Woods and Craig Robertson, and are aided by funding from Preston Lodge RFC.

The club is made up of girls between the ages of 12 and 18 who come from Preston Lodge, North Berwick, Dunbar, Musselburgh Grammar and Ross High Schools and all share the love of the sport.

The Canadian teams, nicknamed 'The Wolves', have travelled from the Ontario province during their spring break and will play a number of teams across Scotland, while also exploring the country's culture.

They have brought a total of 35 players, forming two teams at under-16 and under-18 level, ahead of further matches at Galashiels RFC, Oban Lorne RFC and Cartha Queens Park RFC.

Due to required numbers, East Lothian were supported by girls from Border Girls RFC and Livingston RFC, for the games.

During an afternoon which consisted of severe storms and bright sunshine, the home side prevailed 34-12 in the U16 fixture, before the Canadians secured a 24-12 win in the U18 game.

East Lothian coach Craig Robertson explained: "I was contacted by Richie Gledson



at Sky High Tours, who asked if we could accommodate a touring girls team from Canada. We were really pleased it was able to happen and it was a great occasion.

"The popularity of girls rugby in Ontario is staggering, with 32 U18's teams having contested the annual OFSAA State Championship last year and this showed in the close results and the great rugby that was played at Preston Lodge."

With four or five East Lothian players currently involved in talent programmes within the Scottish Rugby set up, it was a great opportunity for them to test themselves against unknown opposition and Craig

explained it is the kind of challenge they need to improve and advance their careers.

Having taken in the Guinness Six Nations clash between Scotland and Wales at BT Murrayfield, the touring Canadians also embarked on a Highland Games championship at Hopetoun House, went Gorge Walking near Fort William and enjoyed sightseeing in Edinburgh, Oban and Glasgow.

Any girls who are interested in taking up the game are encouraged to get in touch via eastlothiangirlsrugby@gmail.com or through the 'East Lothian Girls Rugby' Facebook page.



OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNGSTERS TO HONE SKILLS AT ST. ANDREWS

With a recent £14m investment in the indoor sports facilities, combined with highly-qualified coaching staff, and a variety of halls of residence surrounding the pitches, the University of St Andrews is now positioned as one of the best venues for sports training camps in Scotland.

New for 2019, the University is launching a rugby summer camps programme for youngsters between the ages of 8-16, providing children the opportunity to develop their sports skills and meet new friends, whilst experiencing university campus life in a fun and friendly environment.

St Andrews has long been favoured as a training destination for many professional rugby teams including Gloucester, Leeds, Edinburgh and our most recent visitors and regular users of our facilities the Scottish National team, so children booking onto the new summer camps programme will really be able to experience what it is like to 'train like a pro'.

The camp is open to both boys and girls aged 8-16, the five-day rugby camp will follow a structured programme designed and led by University of St Andrews Director of Rugby Scott Lawson. Scott offers a wealth of rugby knowledge and experience having gained 47 Caps for Scotland over a 15-year professional career.

He has also worked as a Specialist skills coach within Scottish Rugby and has recently joined the Scotland U20s coaching team. Scott said: "The camp will be underpinned with the best coaching practice as outlined in Scottish Rugby's technical blueprint and utilising the RFU's CARDS philosophy. But most importantly, the exclusive elite level coaching will be delivered in a fun and enjoyable

environment, at some of the best facilities in Scotland."

The coaches

A team of highly qualified coaches will support Scott to deliver the camp including Samoan international Quintan Sanft, who as well as being the St. Andrews 1st XV backs coach is also Head Coach of local side Kirkcaldy. St Andrews Women's 1st XV lead coach and full-time development officer Sarah Hogwood will also be amongst the coaching staff for the week, bringing her specialised knowledge of the Women's game both at senior and age grade level, alongside her expertise in coaching regional academy sides.

What to expect

Elite coaching
Advice on nutrition
Strength and Conditioning workshops
Video analysis
Exclusive personalised St Andrews Rugby Camps kit
Team development challenges, competitions and prizes
International player appearances
Strength and Conditioning
During the week players will take part in a supervised session with the university's qualified UK Strength and Conditioning



Accredited (UKSCA) coaches, making use of the dedicated Performance Gym to test their speed and power.

Social programme

The camp offers various evening activities including rock climbing, tennis, badminton, yoga and Zumba. With tennis and hockey summer camps running side-by-side, players will get the opportunity to meet new people from across the world and hopefully make friends for life.

Accommodation

Players will stay in single en-suite shower rooms in modern three-star David Russell Apartments situated next to the sports fields, providing a home from home and a chance to get a taste of life on a vibrant university campus. The rugby camp has the option for either Day or Residential attendance.

Residential £450

Non-residential £250

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REFLECTING ON A 'GREAT YEAR' AT MERCHISTON

Merchiston Castle rugby players, Jamie Dobie, Matthew Currie and Dan Gamble, have been looking back on a great year - and ahead to an exciting future.

At a school level, they have been great leaders for the under-18 team and were delighted to help the side win the Scottish Schools' Scottish Cup final at BT Murrayfield before Christmas.

Scrum-half Dobie said: "We knew that we had a good school team this year, but that means nothing if you don't go out and perform on the pitch."

Dobie captained the team in that match and was named Player of the Match, but as centre Currie explained, Director of Rugby, Roddy Deans, is keen on having more than one leader on the pitch.

"Rugby, nowadays, is about having a group of leaders out there on the pitch and in the final we tried to support Jamie as much as we could," Currie said.

"The school culture encourages a lot of talking and it means that we communicate well on the pitch as well as in between matches, so we know what to focus on at training."

Prop Gamble, believes the tour to South Africa with the school, greatly helped the 1XV going into this season. "There was a really big group of us that went on tour and I think spending that much time together

travelling really helped us to create a good bond as a group," Gamble stated.

As well as exams coming up, the pupils are also getting ready for the under-18s Six Nations Festival in England in April.

The festival which is participated in by Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales, France and Italy, sees each nation play three fixtures over 10 days.

Dobie, Currie and Gamble all played for the under-18s last year when Scotland secured some great results and they are hopeful of being involved this time around under new Head Coach, Ross Miller.

"Playing for the under-18s is a step up because the opposition are always tough, but we feel that the experiences we have had in rugby at Merchiston stand us in good stead for that kind of test," Gamble explained.

"The coaches at the school push us hard, while also helping us to continue with our education and there has been a good balance."

Boys in the 1XV are encouraged to take part in many of the other facets of school life, such as drama, debating and music – they're not just rugby players, they're influential in many aspects of the school.

The teachers and coaches understand that rugby may not appeal to all boys. In the early years, each boy has an opportunity to play in a team that suits

his level and represent Merchiston.

Deans said: "All three boys are outstanding role models for all our younger pupils. They live and breathe our 'Solid Castle' values, and set the standards for others to follow."

"They are all very selfless, humble and committed young men. Our rugby philosophy and culture simply caters for all. The beauty of rugby is that it brings together 15 different positions, which means that all players contribute to the team performance."

"Our Scottish Cup success this year was built in South Africa, where we travelled with 50 senior players. The foundations of our senior teams are built from our junior years and this is clear with 19 out of the 22 Cup squad attending our school from S2."

"My goal as Director of Rugby, is to set each boy on their rugby pathway, whether that is professional, club, university or just social rugby. Rugby is a vehicle to open doors and to build friendships, which will only help all pupils in their chosen pathway."

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FROM ABERDEENSHIRE TO FIJI - CHLOE'S STORY

Chloe Hannant can usually be found turning out for Aberdeenshire Quines, but later this year, she wants to give that up to spend two months spreading the rugby gospel in Fiji. SCRUM caught up with the Robert Gordon University student to find out more.

A student from Aberdeen is preparing to swap the Granite City for the beaches of Fiji, but it will be no holiday for Chloe Hannant as she looks to help youngsters in the Pacific island continue their rugby journeys.

The 21-year-old, who is in her fourth year studying physiotherapy at Robert Gordon University, began her own rugby journey in 2015 when she led Murrayfield Wanderers to victory in the U18 Girls Cup final at BT Murrayfield.

Since then, Chloe has helped form the university's women's rugby team and has been plying her club trade in Tennent's National League 2 with Aberdeenshire, but now she wants to continue to promote rugby on the other side of the world.

She explained to *SCRUM* more about the two-month project: "My project supports a small charity, Think Pacific Foundation, who work in remote

villages, where over one third of children grow up in poverty and where over 200 schools were damaged during Cyclone Winston in February 2016.

"I'll experience tough and challenging conditions as I volunteer to deliver a government backed programme to inspire children living in hardship. I'll also donate vital sports resources to enable our good work to continue long term.

"Through the project my aim is to gain a deeper insight into life in the developing world and use skills gained through my education and extracurricular interests to make a personal difference to children.

I hope to immerse myself into the local culture, challenge myself and contribute globally.

It will be a very different experience for her in Fiji and will take some getting used to, as the area only has electricity once a week for a couple of hours,

to enable people to make phone calls and to charge up devices.

Ahead of the trip in September, Chloe needs to raise £1000. Currently in a moonboot following an injury, she was forced to cancel her plan of doing a sponsored run. She has instead got a couple of events lined up with her local rugby club, and is looking for anyone who can help her reach her target, to get in touch.

She added: "Over one third of this funding will be used directly to support the children in Fiji by supplying resources, helping to re-build and equip schools and supporting long term educational initiatives for children and local teachers."

Fundraising page:
www.gofundme.com/manage/chloe039s-campaign-for-think-pacific-foundation



GLASGOW WARRIORS TEAM UP WITH STRATHCLYDE SPORT

The University of Strathclyde launched a new £31m sports facility in September 2018: Strathclyde Sport. The state-of-the-art facility sits in the heart of the city centre and is part of the university's £650m campus redevelopment.

The new facility creates more opportunities for members to experience different sports, exercise classes, recreational activities and, as a result, has seen a significant increase in participation levels.

In addition, University Sport clubs and high-performance sport students compete and train in an environment conducive to improving their talent and competitive outcomes and these opportunities continue to be enhanced through strategic partnerships being established.

In November 2018, the University of Strathclyde became official sponsors of Glasgow Warriors. Head of Sport, Neil Brown said: "This partnership is part of an exciting journey we're embarking on to establish Strathclyde as a centre of excellence in rugby, aligning sporting opportunity with academic attainment.

"By working with Glasgow Warriors we will have positive impact on the student experience and student recruitment and further cements our reputation for sport following the opening of our state-of-the-art

Strathclyde Sport facility. "Strathclyde has a strong reputation of playing a part in the development of successful rugby players whilst at the institution, with the likes of Glasgow Warriors player James Malcom, who is currently undertaking his Mechanical Engineering whilst playing at the highest level."

Nathan Bombrys, Managing Director for Glasgow Warriors, said: "There are some very exciting on the field opportunities ahead, in addition to exploring opportunities for their students to learn in collaboration with our business through work place experience or research opportunities within the performance and commercial departments of the club.

"The University of Strathclyde is one of Scotland's largest universities and we're looking forward to enhancing its excellent reputation in sport through this exciting new partnership."

Men's and Women's Rugby Union is now one of the University of Strathclyde's GOLD FOCUSports and as such additional support is given to top tier student Rugby athletes. The partnership with Glasgow Warriors has been critical in the provision of this additional support as it has led to the inaugural appointment of a Director of Rugby at the University of Strathclyde. The role involves coaching the Rugby Union teams alongside Performance

and Specialist Coaches. Another crucial element of this role is identifying and recruiting talented Student Rugby Union players.

Director of Rugby Gary Strain said: "The University's Rugby Union teams are going from strength to strength; with the women's team being unbeaten so far in 2019 and having a Cup Final to look forward to. Both teams are really benefitting from the extra coaching they are getting and are inspired by the partnership with the Glasgow Warriors."

Year-round strength and conditioning support is provided by highly experienced practitioners at the new facility on Cathedral Street and the Rugby Union teams train a short 15-minute drive away at the world-class facilities at Stepps Playing Field.

In addition to the support offered to top tier athletes competing in FOCUSports, the University offers Performance Sport Scholarships to World-Class athletes. Performance Sport Scholars are provided with a comprehensive support package funded by Strathclyde Sport and through generous donations from the University of Strathclyde Alumni Community.

For more information:
www.strath.ac.uk/strathclydesport

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For information contact
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JAMES MALCOLM
Performance Sport Scholar at the
University of Strathclyde.





More than £90,000 was raised at a dinner organised to honour former Stewart's Melville College pupil Doddie Weir.

Over 700 guests filled the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh to honour Stewart's Melville 'old boy' Doddie Weir OBE. Organised by Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools (ESMS), the dinner was held to raise money for the My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation and the ESMS Access to Excellence charity, which supports 150 means-tested bursaries to the schools.

Compered by Doddie's former class-mate, and now BBC News Presenter David Henderson, the evening had a fantastic buzz as old school friends, many travelling from far and wide, caught up

DODDIE GOES 'OLD SCHOOL' AS DINNER RAISES MORE THAN £90,000



over a delicious dinner. A hotly contested auction then bid for prizes including a private jet to Paris, golf at St Andrews, and items of priceless Doddie memorabilia.

ESMS were particularly grateful for the financial commitment of headline sponsors Carbon Financial and Craneware, as well as the support of other sponsors, individuals and organisations who generously donated auction items.

Jill Douglas, CEO of Doddie's Foundation, spoke movingly about the vital work their fundraising was able to support including research grants and living assistance for current sufferers. But of course, the star of the evening was the Big Man himself. Wearing his old school blazer(!) Doddie delivered an inspiring and emotional speech

about his battle with Motor Neurone Disease that left barely a dry eye in the room.

However, smiles were soon restored as the evening climaxed with a rousing performance of The Proclaimers' 500 Miles, with lyrics rewritten as a tribute to Doddie. Current pupils, with the support of Craig and Charlie Reid, presented Doddie a copy of the rewritten words. Two additional copies were also donated for auction.

Reflecting on a very special evening, Doddie's school 1st XV coach, and now ESMS Director of Development Bryan Lewis said: "We are very proud to have brought the Erskine Stewart's Melville family together to raise over £90,000 for Doddie's Foundation and Access to Excellence. The standing ovation Doddie received showed

how much his old school friends admire his amazing courage and strength of mind."

Jill Douglas was equally impressed: "The pupils and staff of ESMS put in an incredible effort to stage this wonderful event and the performance of 500 Miles will live long in the memory. We would like to thank everyone who made this such a successful and memorable fundraising night." And the final word, of course, goes to Doddie himself: "It was a superb night with so many friends. I'd like to thank everyone who made it possible - Bryan and the team put in a huge effort - and to everyone who donated auction items and placed bids. A great night, a great dinner...and a school blazer that got even tighter."



PROVIDING FITNESS HOME FOR RUGBY STARS

Not many gym-goers can say they have rubbed shoulders or shared treadmills with some of the country's top rugby stars, but that is something that users of Village Gym in Edinburgh are able to boast.

The gym, off the capital's Ferry Road, has had a partnership with Edinburgh Rugby for the past three years, allowing the club's players and staff full access to use the club at their leisure.

Sarah McCallum, Leisure Club Manager, explained more about the partnership. She said: "Whether the players want to just chill out in the 20m pool, sauna, steam room or jacuzzi after a hard day's training or get in additional sessions in the gym to help their performance for the weekend, our facilities allow them to perform at their best.

"We also have a similar partnership with Scottish Rugby so we have fantastic

relationships with high-performing teams."

Anyone from high-performance athletes to those looking to get themselves fit are able to benefit from a range of equipment in the gym, as Sarah continued: "We have a fully kitted out gym with high spec equipment any rugby player could utilise to help their game. From a full-size lifting platform, half racks and free weights plus 100 pieces of cardiovascular machines.

"We also have three generous studios which offer over 120 group exercise classes a week. Classes such as our cycle programmes (sprint, RPM and the trip) by Les Mills."

She added that the classes may also be beneficial for players looking to make comebacks from injury lay-offs, adding: "For players who may be injured or getting back into fitness for example, spin classes are a great way to take the impact off the body

and work on fitness - all with amazing music and motivational coaches.

Village Hotels, which runs the gyms, has been well established in England and Wales for many years, before making a foray into the Scottish market by opening in Aberdeen and Edinburgh in 2014, before a Glasgow club opened in 2015.

There are plans for the business to expand further, with hopes of 50 hotels across the UK by 2025, and in Edinburgh, there are discussions about a gym and hotel refurbishment later this year, while working alongside local projects as part of the Village Green Programme. Continuing the relationships with Edinburgh Rugby and Scottish Rugby is also high on the agenda.

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HEALING CHRONIC PAIN WITH PILATES

Although Iain Dunn's journey to Pilates is one of those typical 'transformation' stories you often hear of, in the world of alternative health and fitness. He remains adamant that you couldn't have found a less likely "health-guru-type" in the whole of Scotland.

Discovering Pilates a number of years ago offered him a chance of recovery after a diagnosis of Chronic Pain. Today, he's a master teacher no less of the Pilates method and a passionate advocate of holistic health. In Iain's view: "There's nothing more scientific than taking the holistic approach."

A former Head Waiter at the Balmoral Hotel, Iain confessed to leading a "toxic lifestyle" that had all the setups for a health crisis. He said: "I was an epic consumer of junk food, alcohol, smoking, everything really then. It was fitness in my 20s; running, cycling and swimming to an extreme. I was injured a lot but I just kept going - it was addictive behaviour really."

Then when tragedy struck in his



personal life, things took a turn for the worse, as Iain explained: "I'd had health problems my whole life that I was able to ignore but when my Mum came down with a brain tumour things really kicked off. She suffered a lot before she died so that was a difficult time, a lot of stress. Chronic Pelvic Pain Syndrome was my diagnosis but like a lot of chronic diseases there was no treatment or advice, just painkillers. I was 26, off work for six months and I was told I would just have to live with it basically."

"I was in a very dark place, and honestly I felt ashamed and embarrassed having these weird symptoms. I started experimenting with stuff I never imagined I'd get into; meditating, learning to breathe better, daily stretching. I thought I might become a physio myself but I got

referred to an amazing Pilates teacher who had similar experiences himself and that really was the game changer. So, I still feel like I'm trying to pay my good luck forward. I can't imagine where I'd be without Pilates"

So now Iain has his own studio on the shore of Leith where he teaches mat and 'full studio' Pilates for all, which involves the use of large spring loaded 'apparatus' despite resembling medieval torture machines, Iain insists these were originally invented for rehabilitation, and he of course specialises in chronic pain.

He continued: "A lot of what I do is working with people who have stubborn or ambiguous pains in their backs, hips or pelvis. I love what I do, and I think having had to change so much myself, I can really relate and empathise with my clients. I might direct them towards other therapies



when needed but fundamentally we try and address the causes of why we experience recurring injuries or pain instead of just responding to symptoms. Obviously the precision training of Pilates makes up most of it but I also try and pass on self-healing approaches, like meditation or how to use massage tools, I bring listening and talking therapy to my 1:1's perhaps discussing traumatic experiences or just offloading of day to day stress has great value too".

Iain is in his second year at his studio on Commercial Street and is clearly relishing getting to do things his own way. He added: "To make drastic change you really have to take the practice level up, the progress clients on my full membership are making is awesome. They improve quickly, changing the way they move and feel by coming two or three times a week.

"Particularly in chronic cases, even with fatigue or mental health challenges clients can relax about their time at the studio and spend a whole session maybe just on one specific aspect they struggle with or



have an hour just releasing tension, so it's definitely the regular practice that makes the difference."

Iain explained that his core message to anyone relating to his experiences is that learning how to take charge of your

own recovery is the key. "I only teach the method, but you do the hard work, you make the changes and that's why it works."

For more information:
www.iaindunnpilates.com

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